# Contents

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** ............... 4  
**COMPANY DESCRIPTION** .............. 6  
**GUIDING PRINCIPLES** .................. 6  
**MISSION, VISION, VALUES, GOALS.** .............. 7  
**BUSINESS PHILOSOPHY** .................. 8  
**INDUSTRY OVERVIEW** ................... 8  
**MARKET SEGMENT OVERVIEW** .......... 8  
**COMPANY STRENGTHS AND COMPETENCIES** .......... 9  
**LEGAL FORM OF OWNERSHIP** .......... 9  
**PRODUCTS AND SERVICES** .......... 9  

**MARKETING PLAN** ................. 10  
**ECONOMICS** .......................... 11  
**PRODUCT** ............................. 12  
**COMPETITION** .......................... 12  
**MAINSTREAM COMPETITORS** .......... 14  
**SUSTAINABILITY FOCUSED COMPETITORS** .......... 14  
**COMPETITIVE FIELD SUMMARY** .......... 15  
**CUSTOMERS** ........................... 15  
**CUSTOMER SUMMARY** .................. 16  
**NICHE** ................................. 16  
**STRATEGY** ............................. 17  
**PROMOTION** ............................ 17  
**PROMOTIONAL BUDGET** ............... 17  
**PRICING** ............................... 18  
**PROPOSED LOCATION** ............... 18  
**DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS** .......... 18  
**SALES FORECAST** ...................... 18
Operational plan .......................... 20

IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK ............ 20
PRODUCTION ................................ 24
LOCATION .................................... 25
ACCESS ........................................ 25
COST ............................................ 25
LEGAL ENVIRONMENT ....................... 26
PERSONNEL .................................... 26
INVENTORY ..................................... 27
SUPPLIERS ..................................... 27
CREDIT POLICIES .............................. 27

MANAGEMENT AND ORG.............. 28

PROFESSIONAL AND ADVISORY SUPPORT .... 29

STARTUP EXPENSES AND CAP........ 30

START-UP EXPENSES ....................... 30
CAPITALIZATION .............................. 33
PERSONAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT ........ 33

FINANCIAL PLAN ......................... 34

TWELVE-MONTH PROFIT AND LOSS PROJECTION .......... 34
PROJECTED CASH FLOW .................... 35
OPENING DAY BALANCE SHEET ............. 36
BREAK-EVEN ANALYSIS ..................... 36

NEXT STEPS ............................. 37

CONCLUSION .............................. 37

WORKS CITED .............................. 38
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

General Company Description

The Loop Learning Company develops, publishes, and markets a family of high-quality learning solutions that focus on leveraging fundamental sustainability concepts to enhance and improve current professional industries.

Products And Services

Loop Learning’s mission is to make humanity thrive by spreading better ways of doing business. This work ultimately will create a world focused on creating beauty, inspiration, and expression through learning.

The learning platform and sustainability-based learning programs help individuals and organizations leverage the power of sustainable knowledge and application to enhance traditional professional practices.

Marketing Plan

Continuing education programs are growing and more adults are enrolling in postsecondary education than they did 10 years ago. (Michael Horn n.d.) However, what these programs look like is evolving as the return on a significant higher education investment is questioned. Loop Learning can provide professionals a way to learn about sustainability in a meaningful way that is tailored to their skills and profession. At the same time a certification completion shows their employer that they are growing and thinking about how they can become a leader at their company.

Most importantly Loop Learning certification is about leveraging a new way of doing business. One that takes into account the environment, people, culture, and economics. After completion of the certification program, a Loop Learner understands how to plan and operate professionally within a complex set of systems that can work to protect the environment, understand issues that affect people and culture, and add value to the business they serve.

Loop Learning plans on accessing learners interested in sustainability through established professional organizations and through targeted online marketing. The company embraces a digital experience and wants to target professionals who already are comfortable with that medium.

Operational Plan

Because Loop Learning embraces the digital world the online experience needs to be bright, clean, and engaging. The interface needs to be easy to access with options for multimedia that doesn’t overwhelm. Another advantage of embracing digital is the benefit of connecting remotely for customers and staff. The lack of a physical location needed for customer interaction allows for remote workers and, thus, a reduction in up-front costs.

Loop Learning wants to develop these programs for professionals as a way to spread sustainability learning. The company foresees the desire to build these programs as a partnership with other organizations and hopes to use grant funding to build flexible applications that can be leverage for future project. Because of this, the company will be established as a nonprofit organization.

There won’t be many full-time staff. Contractors and volunteers will be used to provide the robust services needed to create and host the learning modules rather than building internal expertise until the product can mature and support additional staff through sales. The executive director and one or two additional staff will operate much of the day-to-day functions of the organization.
Management And Organization

Loop Learning will be established as a nonprofit under a board of directors to provide oversight and governance to the work of the organization.

Financial Plan

There are two major financial hurdles as Loop Learning considers launching. The first is establishing the curriculum and outcome assessment. It takes time and expertise to develop a custom learning plan around each profession. The second hurdle is the development of the learning management system. This has the potential to be the most costly part of the launch. However, an established system could result in easier module development in the future.

Next Steps

Loop Learning is currently seeking grant funding to cover the curriculum development and learning management system creation to host the new curriculum. If initial funding can be developed, the product can be easily scaled and marketing efforts can be pushed forward.
COMPANY DESCRIPTION

The Loop Learning Company develops, publishes, and markets a family of high-quality learning solutions that focus on leveraging fundamental sustainability concepts to enhance and improve current professional industries. The company goal is to create a generation of passionate professionals equipped to meet new and challenging business demands, one solution at a time.

Loop Learning has a nimble ethos designed to mimic the successful business models we hope to inspire in others. Driven by digital, the product line helps to produce measured learning outcomes and fosters meaningful connections within a strong sustainability community.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

“The ultimate purpose of business is not, or should not be, simply to make money. Nor is it merely a system of making and selling things. The promise of business is to increase the well-being of humankind through service, creative invention, and ethical action.” (Hawken n.d.)

Paul Hawken’s perspective on business touches on one of Loop Learning’s foundational tenants—creating business value beyond profits. The value generated by Loop Learning should have impact on business, people, nature, and culture. This value is created largely through the design of integrated approaches to significant learning experiences.

The Living Principles for Design framework has helped Loop Learning create a structure for its guiding principles and is a catalyst for driving positive cultural change. Created by sustainability professionals working with the AIGA (a U.S. national graphic arts industry group), the Learning Principles for Design framework distills the four streams of sustainability—environment, people, economy, and culture—into a road map that is understandable, integrated, and most importantly, actionable.

The Living Principles
Four Streams Of Integrated Sustainability

**Environment:** Actions and issues that affect natural systems, including climate change, preservation, carbon footprint and restoration of natural resources.

- Loop Learning will strive to operate at net zero. This means the operation of the company will have a net zero impact on water, energy, and waste through a combination of sustainability efforts.
- Loop Learning will work to be transparent with metrics measuring environmental impacts and the work and challenges facing progress toward its goal of net zero.

**People:** Actions and issues that affect all aspects of society, including poverty, violence, injustice, education, healthcare, safe housing, labor and human rights.

- Loop Learning values diversity of people, perspectives, and backgrounds. We truly believe that having a full range of ideas and perspectives make us stronger.
- Loop Learning will work with intentionality to foster workforce diversity, a culture of inclusion, and the promotion of social justice inside and outside the company.
**Economy:** Actions and issues that affect how people and organizations meet their basic needs, evolve and define economic success and growth.

- Loop Learning believes that long-term value can be created through a commitment to the sustainable delivery of high-quality educational products. This commitment ensures that we keep the promise to our broad constituency and push for fresh perspectives as the company and customers navigate challenging business landscapes.

- Loop Learning is committed to success against competition and other challenges. We see opportunity in a changing culture with new attitudes and expectations.

**Culture:** Actions and issues that affect how communities manifest identity, preserve and cultivate traditions, and develop belief systems and commonly accepted values.

- Loop Learning is committed to supporting the cultural shift in adopting sustainable values through the company, partners, and communities served. Part of this means creating space for dialogue around how these issues affect people, place, and nature — especially if they challenge cultural norms and commonly held beliefs.

**MISSION, VISION, VALUES, GOALS**

**Mission Statement:** To make humanity thrive by spreading better ways of doing business.

**Vision Statement:** A world focused on creating beauty, inspiration, and expression through learning.

**Values Statement:** Loop Learning wants to deliver high-quality learning solutions to business professionals in a way that models the principles we teach. To do this we invest in each other and our team. Loop Learning doesn’t believe that the best ideas come from an organizational chart. They come from passionate people who believe in the mission and values of the company. Through a strong focus on shared company values and believing in the power of people, Loop Learning will bring forth the best products to do nothing less than change the world.

1. **Default to Action:** A bias toward action helps to turn great ideas into results. Loop Learning believes that employees don’t need wait around to get permission to fix a problem.

2. **No one is above the rest:** Employees at Loop Learning are smart, skilled, and trustworthy. Because of this, we trust each our self-interest behind our customer and our teammates.

3. **It’s all about experience:** We want a transformational and rich learning experience for all of our customers. If that experience is being diminished for any reason it needs to be addressed quickly and turned into a positive for our customer.
**Goals and Objectives**

As our mission states, we want to make humanity thrive by providing a rich learning experience that is nothing short of transformational for people and businesses. To achieve this lofty mission, we have some goals that help us get there.

- Establish a full learning module and certification product for graphic designers and print production professionals.
- Establish a learning assessment program with metrics to ensure high-quality learning outcomes and effectiveness of products.
- Create annual benchmarks to measure and assess progress toward net zero company impact.

**BUSINESS PHILOSOPHY**

- Loop Learning strives to make humanity better by focusing on business, people, and nature.
- For business, we want an accessible product that offers a transformational learning experience at an affordable price.
- For people, we want to change perspectives about the importance of community and the power of change.
- For nature, we want to make a circular economy to become the goal of all business, not just a desire to less bad. Nature should be a model to show us how to act and interact with all of these connected systems.

**INDUSTRY OVERVIEW**

The educational industry has undergone some immense change over the past couple of decades in large part to a shift in technology. A traditional classroom education isn’t necessary to achieve a high-quality education. Certifications and certificates are more commonly used by professionals to show career progress. Thus, smaller educational programs with targeted goals can appeal to professionals looking for career advancement.

**MARKET SEGMENT OVERVIEW**

Loop Learning wants to go after highly motivated and digitally savvy professionals looking for a way to advance their careers and add value to their companies in a positive way. Some of the trends that Loop Learning can take advantage of are:

- Contextualized learning – using modern design thinking
- Two-way conversations in eLearning – capturing wants and opinions to customize learner’s needs
- Better use of data — another way to personalize learning content
- Microlearning — short, focused, regular challenges to engage and reward
- Social eLearning — polling, discussions (Penfold 2016)
COMPANY STRENGTHS AND COMPETENCIES

Loop learning lives in the digital world at the intersection between high-quality learning experiences and flexible educational opportunities. The company is built to be nimble and responsive to develop flexible and customizable education solutions for individuals and companies. Once platforms are built, their customization becomes much easier and scalable in a way that still preserves the amazing experience for learners.

LEGAL FORM OF OWNERSHIP

Loop Learning would initially become a partnership or LLC as it works to establish its products and services. However, it would work toward becoming a B Corp in the near term.

Loop Learning is aligned most of the standards put forth in the B Impact Assessment. The assessment process helps to gauge how the company, as a B Corp, is better for its workers, community, customers, and the environment. This process would also be in line with the stated goal of being net zero.

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Loop Learning provides educational services and certifications in sustainable-related business fields. As an initial offering, there is a focus in the graphic design and print production field.

- Sustainable Graphic Design Course Module (subscription to learning)
- Sustainable Graphic Design Pre-Test (subscription to learning)
- Sustainable Graphic Design Testing/Assessment (fee)
- Sustainable Print Production Course Module (subscription to learning)
- Sustainable Print Production Pre-Test (subscription to learning)
- Sustainable Print Product Testing/Assessment (fee)
- Optional in-person seminars and workshops
MARKETING PLAN

To better understand the learning market Loop Learning hopes to enter, consider the higher education industry and how we can draw parallel customer motivations. It also can help us see how there is opportunity in attracting learners who can’t afford a degree-seeking program.

The mounting challenges to providers of higher education have been felt for some time. In addition to high-quality learning experience, students demand an ever-increasing amount of flexible services and amenities in return for their tuition dollars. For colleges and universities, the costs of meeting these demands (ex., building maintenance, salaries to recruit/retain top-notch instructors, wellness facilities, and housing) are a significant challenge to their long-held business model. The traditional response to increasing business costs has been to increase tuition. However, increasing tuition creates a barrier for many degree-seeking students and has helped to create a national debate about the value of a degree. This value gap widens when you consider that the 6-year graduation rate for an undergraduate student who began their degree work in 2009 is only 59 percent (National Center for Education Statistics 2017).

Market Research: Opportunity

Loop Learning sees many opportunities in this learning market environment and we want to focus on connecting with an audience that is ready for a new way to learn and connect at their own pace.

According to New America, students are looking for specific returns on their learning investment when they decided to enroll in a degree-seeking program. The top three reasons for getting a degree were: to improve employment opportunities (91%); to make more money (90%); and to get a good job (89%). (Fishman 2015)

These answers aren’t surprising. However, Loop Learning is dedicated to creating a learning program that delivers on what professional learners are seeking — career development through adding strategic skill sets for advancement.

The other side of the opportunity coin for Loop Learning is a business climate that is thirsty for professionals that can help navigate sustainability issues for their company. Sustainability issues can range from natural resource reduction to supply chain management to external reporting of a company’s environmental record. (Hamilton 2012)

A 2009 study entitled “2009 Greening of Corporate America” surveyed large firms to find out about their sustainability practices. Three quarters of respondents reported that they were engaging in sustainability activities and 61 percent of respondents reported having a person or team dedicated to sustainability. (Hamilton 2012) This study helps to illustrate that sustainability is becoming more of a standard practice among several industries.

Market Research: Methodology

The learning market as a whole is large. It is necessary to have a strategy for growth that allows Loop Learning to build on success and market niches that can be built up over time. The assumption is that by focusing on sustainability for professionals, Loop Learning can offer a unique value proposition and achieve the businesses — and, ultimately, its mission, “To make humanity thrive by spreading better ways of doing business.”

The first area of exploration is with graphic design and production manager professionals. Loop Learning wants to use this professional area as a testing ground to develop its online learning, test preparation, and certification program.
To better understand the market, Loop Learning wants to engage print production and graphic design professionals through a survey to obtain a cross-section analysis of interest. Graphic designers do not work alone in the creation of visual materials and it is important to understand the relationships between professionals in different related industries. Because of this a modified survey of printers, mail houses, agencies, marketing firms, and third-party certification entities could offer valuable insight into how they might view a need for a graphic designer or production manager with deeper sustainability skills.

**ECONOMICS**

As graphic designers move forward into an ever-changing industry of visual communication, the problems they will face are design challenges with a variety of context and deep in collaboration. Designers also will “occupy more positions where they are directing or consulting on larger and more complex systems of experience.” (Cezzar 2017)

The oldest and largest professional organization dedicated to this group is AIGA and has more than 25,000 members in more than 70 chapters across the United States (AIGA 2017). Several other groups exist specifically for in-house designers, freelance designers, and print designers. Access to this group could represent a power relationship to tap into the market of graphic design and print production manager market.

**What is the total size of the market?**

The global size of the eLearning marketing is estimated to be more than $165 billion in 2015 with growth expected to reach more than $240 billion by 2023. In the United State, the value of the eLearning market is estimated to have been about $27 billion at the end of 2016. Part of the driver of this market is the accessibility and learning tool enhancements that help to build a vibrant and visually engaging learning experience. (docebo 2016)

**Market Barriers – high-quality online experience**

The mix of eLearning categories also is expanding. This is providing more avenues for development and connection to potential learners. In addition to now established online Learning Management Systems, there are some newcomers to the eLearning stage. These include social learning, mobile learning, microlearning, and corporate MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses). These new technologies bring flexibility and convenience to learners.

The variety of eLearning modes presents a challenge because of the cost of development. Each channel needs to be done well and tested to ensure it meets the Loop Learning standard. In addition to the various channels, there are trends in eLearning that include: game-based learning or gamification and wearable technology (including 3D wear). (docebo 2016)

**Market Barriers – the name behind the brand**

Like any brand, a name helps to define an experience for customers. However, for education providers, a name has to mean something specific to an employer. For established institutions of higher-education, that often means using an accredited body to verify standards and validate educational outcomes for students earning a degree.

With a certification, the issuing institution or organization build their reputation for validating a set of skills and knowledge. This means the development of name recognition to the community it serves is essential to building value for learners. As previously stated, the main reason for additional learning is to grow earning potential for the future. If an institution fails to develop trust and brand recognition, it will fail to offer value to learner gaining certifications from that organization.
PRODUCT
To understand better what kind of service is being provided, it is critical to understand similar types of continuing educational products that are already in the market. There are three similar types of non-degree programs:

- Credentials — these are issued by a third party with authoritative power and shows an individual’s qualifications or competency in a given subject.
- Certification — these are obtained through a formal process that validates an individual’s qualifications in a certain subject.
- Certificate Program – this program issues a certificate of completion for learning in one particular aspect of an individual’s field to supplement prior education (National Environmental Health Association n.d.)

Loop Learning want to focus on the certification program.

The certification product then has three main components:

- The learning module
- The pre-test module
- The testing module

Features and Benefits
Because Loop Learning has embraced a nimble and digital footprint, there are some key features to the type of learning and testing offered through this certification program.

- Fully-online and self-paced learning program — students can begin at any time and proceed at their own learning pace
- Competency-based learning modules – student progress once they have demonstrated mastery of a module section
- Flexible payment options — students can pay as they go for specific modules or a specific class

COMPETITION
Continuing education programs are growing and more adults are enrolling in postsecondary education than they did 10 years ago. (Michael Horn n.d.) This means there is a demand for continued education, but what that learning looks like is changing.

There are sustainability certifications in the marketing. Most notably the International Society of Sustainability Professionals offers two levels of credentials.

- **ISSP Sustainability Associate (ISSP-SA):** For individuals who are new to sustainability or those in allied professions such as purchasing, HR, and facilities management who incorporate sustainability thinking into their work
- **ISSP Certified Sustainability Professional (ISSP-CSP):** For veteran sustainability professionals with five or more years of experience working in the sustainability field

In support of these credentials, ISSP has learning materials (live courses and self-study courses) and testing services. While this service is online and can be self-directed, it doesn’t directly address graphic design and print production professionals with customized learning.
In the final column, estimate the importance of each competitive factor to the customer.  
1 = critical; 5 = not very important.

Table 1: Competitive Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTOR</th>
<th>Loop Learning</th>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Weakness</th>
<th>Competitor, ISSP</th>
<th>Competitor, Certificate</th>
<th>Importance to Customer</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Products</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Price</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>High (established)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
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<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium (variability)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>Medium (not proven)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium (variability)</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expertise</td>
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<td>Image</td>
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<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium (depends)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

There are two areas of competition for Loop Learning. First, there are specific sustainability certifications that are general to professionals, but specific to sustainability. Second, there are flexible continuing education arms of traditional degree-seeking learning institutions. Let us take a closer look at both of them.
MAINSTREAM COMPETITORS

Continuing Education Providers

Continuing education providers is a broad area to look at when considering competition for Loop Learning. Most continuing education providers are online versions of the traditional brick-and-mortar schools. The real competition comes from their embrace of digital platforms and resources to be flexible in creating educational products that people want in order to advance their careers. The experience and quality of their online education of the best providers can be tough to beat. However, they are not all created equal.

ASU Online: ASU is ranked as a top 5 online university in the country by U.S. News & World Report. They draw from the Arizona State University brand to establish credibility. Their marketing also draws upon the key value points for students when they claim that “87 percent of ASU graduates get job offers within 90 days of graduation.” (ASU Online 2017) There are three main products that would compete with the Loop Learning certification. They are the three sustainability graduate certificates offered completely online:

- Sustainable Tourism
- Social Entrepreneurship and Community Development
- Biomimicry

The learning tools include a videos, chats, hangouts, videos, online exams, and interactive simulations. (ASU Online 2017)

A reminder that this product is in competition, but is more in depth than a certification because it is a certificate. A certificate is shows that a learner has completed additional courses beyond their previous degree learning.

Cost: 15 credits x $760 per credit = $11,400 before fees

Website:asuonline.edu

Oregon State University Ecampus: Oregon State University offers more than 25 graduate degree options (including certificates). They are ranked in the top 10 by U.S. News & World Report. They offer a few sustainability related degrees and certificates.

Graduate Certificate in Sustainable Natural Resources: This is an 18-credit online certificate for professionals who want skills in solving complex sustainability problems and is housed in the Sustainable Natural Resources program.

Cost: $528 per credit x 18 credits = $9,504 before fees

Website:ecampus.oregonstate.edu

SUSTAINABILITY FOCUSED COMPETITORS

Sustainability Certifications

Sustainability certifications are established programs that validate an individual’s knowledge about sustainability. The certification process is run by organizations that develop education materials and programs, administer testing operations, and cultivate a membership group of sustainability professionals.
International Society of Sustainability Professionals (ISSP): The ISSP is a nonprofit organization that was established in 2008 and has about 1,000 members. The organization has credibility, which is obvious by looking at its many notable alumni include Ray Anderson (Interface, Inc.) and Karl-Henrik Robert (The Natural Step). The Sustainability Professional Certification is a “globally recognized industry-wide initiative to advance the skills, knowledge and abilities and recognizes the achievement and competency for both new and experienced professionals” (International Society of Sustainability Professionals 2017). Because the ISSP is focused on general sustainability, the certification doesn’t dig deep into how professions, like graphic design connect with sustainability.

Cost:
- ISSP annual membership is $150
- ISSP Sustainability Associate exam is $350*
- ISSP course cost (for credit) is $325*
- ISSP self-study courses are $250*

*Discounts are available for members.

Website: sustainabilityprofessionals.org

COMPETITIVE FIELD SUMMARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Focused on connecting professions with sustainability</td>
<td>• Not as established as online programs or some certifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Embrace learning technologies</td>
<td>• Need to develop technology for a great customer online experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Priced below certificate programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Opportunities                                                            | Threats                                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|                                                                            |
| • There is a price gap between certifications and certificate programs    | • Trust and establishing credibility                                        |
| • More experience driven requirements could be included versus certifications programs | • Being able to find new customers in a competitive environment between two established groups |

CUSTOMERS

Age: 22-40

The age range for a customer can be quite large, but we are assuming that young professionals would be most interested in this kind of learning because of their career aspirations and lack of enough expendable income.
**Location:** Anywhere with access to Internet.

One factor that might limit this is the legal ramifications for issuing a certification to someone in different countries based on regulations that might vary.

**Income:** Low to Middle

The price level for the certification learning and testing should be more accessible than an online degree program, but more than a certification program. This puts our target customer in a low to middle range because Loop Learning assumes someone with more resources would choose a traditional degree-seeking offering.

**Occupation:** Graphic Design and Print Production

Loop Learning plans on rolling out an initial offering of a sustainable graphic design and print production certification. This will help to establish the technology needed for the learning and testing aspects of the business. Then other professional certification areas can be added, thus easily scaling the technology.

**Education:** Already obtained bachelor’s degree or associates degree

This product is intended for someone looking to expand their education. They want to specifically show that they have a good understanding of sustainability issues and can weave what they have learned into their professional area.

**CUSTOMER SUMMARY**

Loop Learning feels that the target customer base will change as technology continues to evolve at a rapid pace and learning technologies adapt, grow and offer new opportunities to connect with learners in meaningful ways.

The company will still focus on learners with previous advanced education who are seeking a way to augment their earning power and build value offering to current and future employers.

Another aspect of this customer base will be communities with an affinity toward sustainability. Many groups currently exist, and those connections could yield powerful relationships.

Finally, as the marketing plan shows, Loop Learning will focus on organic search and search ads to capture search traffic with a specific interest in sustainability and education. This targeted approach will offer useful results for input into our sales funnel.

**NICHE**

Loop Learning see an opportunity to offer professionals a way to learn about sustainability in their chosen field and communicate that to potential employers through a certification program that’s customized, digital, and self-paced.
STRATEGY

Loop Learning’s strategy is to create a product that reinforces sustainability concepts related to the customer’s profession through a simple, visual, and easy to use digital environment. Examples should be related to real-industry experiences. It should highlight professionals that are doing the hard work of embedding sustainability in their day-to-day work. This approach helps to reinforce the concepts needed to pass the certification test. It also helps to engage and show ways of making sustainability real in the student’s career immediately. This is our relevance and experience product strategy. For marketing, these two concepts are at the heart of our promotion strategy. Loop Learning need experts to add credibility so our certification has merit and is desirable. We need a great visual experience because being good at digital is essential to an online experience.

PROMOTION

For an opening promotional campaign, Loop Learning would partner with AIGA to offer members a discount and a free course or learning video. Since AIGA members are likely to be in our target audience, it makes sense to engage with the organization strongly. It would be best to partner directly with the sustainability committees of AIGA on a joint promotion or project.

As a core concept for the initial promotion, the company would highlight a clever sustainability project that an instructor or featured designer came up with using techniques of concepts included in the course. This would then be used as a narrative to describe features of the learning product. A series of these videos would be available on the site to highlight features and sell the certification on the site. As visitor sign up for a free video or course, their information is captured and a customer database is established. This allows for a communication flow to be established with customers who have not matriculated to enrolled student status.

To add to the main launch to AIGA folks, Loop Learning would add an email campaign and social media efforts. This would be built upon a solid SEO program to boost organic search and a healthy budget for buying AdWords and display ads to ensure Loop Learnings target audience can find the site.

Because of the companies’ digital ethos, Loop Learning would not spend money on TV ads, billboards, display ads, or newspapers. This means avoiding almost anything physical.

The graphic design of the site and campaign need to be clever and trendy to capture the eyes of discerning visual communicators. It shouldn’t be flashy and unreadable. However, the Loop Learning site needs to have great graphic design to, again, establish credibility with its target audience.

PROMOTIONAL BUDGET

There are many variables that go into the promotional budget. The startup promotional plan is critical in order to get Loop Learning off the ground and generate funds to re-invest in more product development and marketing. A partnership with an organization, such as AIGA, allows for a boost in Loop Learning’s brand credibility by association. The cost of this partnership through discounts to members will not be reflected here, but it represents a significant initial revenue drop. As outlined above, most of the marketing work revolves around good SEO work and targeted digital advertising.

Our overall strategy for creating a marketing budget will be to develop percentages of startup cost and revenue to develop a guide going forward.

**Startup cost for initial campaign:** $30,000

**Ongoing cost for marketing work:** $25,000 annually (ad words, pandora, and other ad investments)
PRICING

Loop Learning needs to price its products to be significantly more accessible than a certificate degree from an online educational institution. As we saw in the competition analysis, a high-quality higher educational institution can easily cost at least $10,000 for an undergraduate certificate.

On the flip side of a certificate degree, a certification offers demonstration of knowledge or skill in a specific area. A certificate doesn’t offer the breadth of educational experience that an accredited degree can, however Loop Learning envisions a compromise between the cost of a degree and the limited learning opportunities of a certification. With this in mind, Loop Learning will develop a price structure that sets price between these two options.

**Learning Module** (6 to 12 month self-paced learning) – $49 per month for access

**Pre-Testing Module** (1-2 months) – $49 per month for members, $59 per month for non-members

**Exam** – $250 for learning module members, $350 for non-learning module members

**Total cost estimate:** $642-$936 depending on time it takes for student to progress through modules and assuming they are member students.

PROPOSED LOCATION

Initially, Loop Learning will operate remotely with no permanent physical space. Partner organizations will meet via electronic means or in person as needed at their place of business. Since the main interaction with learners will be via digital means, not having a permanent facility will enable a more nimble flexibility to focus on product development.

Competitive products are faced with a similar situation. Their online presence doesn’t require a customer-facing facility. This allows for flexibility when sourcing employees and housing business needs.

DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

Most sales would be self-directed online. Setting up an account and starting a subscription to a learning module or scheduling a test would occur through a credit card transaction with all information saved in the customer database.

A phone sales/support team would be required to answer questions and support the learning modules. Some of that support staff would need to be able to answer and help with specific learning questions related to the modules.

Initially this be housed as staff of Loop Learning. However, as sales grow, most of this could be an outsourced function.

A sales force would eventually need to be developed and it would likely be set up to support specific customer areas, such as businesses looking to offer employees continued education.

SALES FORECAST

To anticipate overall revenue, Loop Learning has created a three-year sales projection based on conservative sales. Each of the main products in the initial graphic design certification has been broken out to see how actual sales goals will affect overall revenue. This provides context for looking deeper into the operational plan.
### Conservative Projection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEARNING MODULE</th>
<th>Sales Goal</th>
<th>Sales Goal</th>
<th>Sales Goal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit Cost</td>
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### Robust Projection

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<tr>
<td>$12,000.00</td>
<td>$24,000.00</td>
<td>$48,000.00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### YEAR 1 TOTAL | YEAR 2 TOTAL | YEAR 3 TOTAL
| $26,700.00  | $53,400.00  | $95,040.00  |

### YEAR 1 TOTAL | YEAR 2 TOTAL | YEAR 3 TOTAL
| $29,700.00  | $74,100.00  | $124,680.00 |
OPERATIONAL PLAN

Once established, the main day-to-day functions of the business are as in the following areas.

- Learning site maintenance — updates, monitoring, and development
- Testing services and accreditation — ensuring testing and certification are executed properly
- Customer service (email, chat, and phone) — related to account and product questions
- Sales and marketing — direct customer contact as well as marketing planning and implementation

There are many regular functions of the business, but they are not in the scope of day-to-day and likely do not require staff to execute.

IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

THE LIVING PRINCIPLES:
Four Streams of Integrated Sustainability

Environment: Actions and issues that affect natural systems, including climate change, preservation, carbon footprint and restoration of natural resources.

BEHAVIORS

Learning Loop strives to push ways in which professionals can protect and restore the natural environment. First, this is done through strategic learning outcomes to equip professionals with the knowledge they need to embark on their sustainability journey. Second, this is done by encouraging a thriving network of professionals focused on sustainability.

The second part of behaviors is looking at Learning Loops own practices and work to ensure they are in-line with the same sustainability perspective being taught. Regarding the environment, this means looking at energy use and carbon footprint. How does Learning Loop establish a baseline goal of being carbon neutral, while always looking at how to create an organization that is restorative.

CREATION

Learn Loop believes that physical products aren't necessary to engage in meaningful learning. This is one way in which the company reduces its environmental impact. All aspects of the business is designed to operate seamlessly in the digital world. By embracing a digital environment, Learning Loop increases its agility to respond to the market needs and lower costs. However, the foundation is rooted in the desire to find ways to reduce impact on the natural world. Learning Loop fundamentally believes that good business is good for the environment as well.

Learning Loop also understands that even though the company is not producing a physical product, there are still many ways in which the environment is being negatively impacted. Some of these impacts come from server and computer energy consumption, electronic device impacts (toxicity, CO2 impact, transportation), employee air travel, heating/cooling/lighting of work environments. These impacts should not be hidden and need to be measured/understood when considering purchases. At the very least, they need to be understood so they can be offset through the purchase of energy offsets.
DURABILITY

Even though Learning Loop strives to live mostly in the digital world, the company recognizes that there are environmental impacts throughout the complex systems of the company and the various systems in which interactions are necessary to do business. Business decisions will be made with to reduce identified impacts internally and externally with partners whenever possible.

When there are opportunities to repair and fix versus replace and buy new — they will be taken.

DISASSEMBLY

The lack of a physical product doesn’t mean there isn’t a significant environmental impact. Learning Loops hopes that this helps to focus the impact on energy use and computer equipment purchases. Measuring this specific area can help target work around reducing or offsetting natural impacts.

SUPPLY CHAIN

Business partners will be selected with a bias for companies that share in sustainable values. Beyond cost, a company needs to reflect a high value and understanding of their natural impacts.

Examples of company attributes Learning Loop looks for in partners will be:

- ISO 14000
- B Corporations
- Transparency about environmental goals

WASTE

Physical waste produced needs to be handled responsibly. Reused if possible. Fixed if possible. Donated if the physical item still has use. Recycled if appropriate. Above all, if something isn’t needed — don’t waste it or be more efficient with what you have.

People: Actions and issues that affect all aspects of society, including poverty, violence, injustice, education, healthcare, safe housing, labor and human rights.

IMPACTS

Education can have a ripple effect on people, families, and communities. Access to education is an issue Learning Loop feels compelled to address through scholarships and outreach work to underserved populations.

Loop Learning believes in empowering employees to drive the company forward and create the kind of work life that will make both successful. The company would explore ways to offer reduced or free tuition for education, flexible work hours and work location.

CONFLICTS

Loop Learning approaches the work of learning and defining outcomes transparently and honestly. We might have lofty goals, but we are honest about communicating the actual results of initiatives.

Loop Learning also strives to portray a realistic narrative when marketing its products and services. Unless necessary, images and stories of actual students will be used and should accurately represent the student base.
DESIRABILITY

Learning Loop feels it is serving a segment of professionals looking for a way to augment their career that is meaningful, but accessible. The segment might be slightly different depending on the professional field a certification is targeting. The company will seek feedback from current and former students, as well as market research, to better understand how that need is changing over time to keep current.

In response to that change, Learning Loop will strive to modify its content to reflect those changes in industry and in sustainability.

NEED / USE

Learning Loop believes that sustainability is tied to everything we do as humans. Each profession has an impact on systems that interact with the environment, people, culture and the economy. Understanding these interactions in a system-based model helps all industries and professionals in those industries.

Through regular assessment of program learning outcomes and survey data from alumni, Learning Loop will monitor the impact of certifications and its learning programs.

LONG VIEW

Learning Loop strives to enhance people's lives through learning that enriches the vocation of professionals in various fields. This is done, in part, by challenging a deeper understanding of a profession as it relates to other systems and how it impacts a larger world view of sustainability.

Economy: Actions and issues that affect how people and organizations meet their basic needs, evolve and define economic success and growth.

SYSTEMIC VIEW

As discussed earlier, a core motivator of students seeking a certification is career growth. This is most often manifested in a desire to obtain more senior positions and increase earning potential. While, this is a clear motivator of our target audience, this isn't the main goal of Loop Learning. Increased earning potential may be a bi-product of having a certification, but each certified professional brings back a broader perspective of systems and sustainability. Ultimately, it has the potential to change the way a type of business is operated.

METRICS

Since Loop Learning is a nonprofit organization, increased revenue from sales reflects additional money to reinvest in products or an opportunity to make learning and certification more accessible through scholarships.

Another key commitment that Loop Learning has is to how services are delivered. Monitoring and moving toward a net-zero carbon impact, or better, is a standard to how services should be delivered. This has an obvious impact to the financial bottom line, but it demonstrates a commitment to merging natural and economic systems.
BENEFITS

Loop Learning’s commitment to investing in renewable energy input is a way of showing the true costs of doing business and it helps to build demand for business solutions for renewable energy (solar, wind, geothermal, hydro).

Loop Learning also seeks ways to find work environments that utilize non-traditional spaces and materials. As the need for more staff space grows, the company will support finding spaces that can be transformed into offices that utilize natural light, bring nature inside, provide space-sharing opportunities for other businesses and use recycled building materials. This kind of thinking demonstrates that open-minded management style that seeks to grow, connect and learn through experience.

TRANSPARENCY & TRUTH

Loop Learning is committed to doing business in a transparent way. As a nonprofit, it is responsible to donors, a board of directors, and auditing processes to ensure proper accountability of management.

Beyond normal financial and governance responsibilities, the company will operate in a transparent manner as it markets itself and as it reports progress on environmental goals and impact.

WASTE=FOOD

Loop Learning will seek to purchase used IT equipment or explore ways to share computer/server resources.

Seek office solutions that integrate businesses that feed off one-another. This might mean that a hydroponic farmer co-exists with a web-based learning company like Loop Learning and can provide server and computer resources. In return, the employees enjoy a natural indoor space to work all year.

FROM PRODUCT TO SERVICE

Loop Learning already provides learning services on a subscription-fee basis. Students can access the learning content when their schedule allows. This affords someone to proceed at their own pace and pay accordingly. Since this content is all digital, it can scale easily and the cost of delivery is fairly low after an initial threshold has been reached.

As discussed earlier, Loop Learning will explore ways to create work spaces that share and collaborate with other businesses to reduce environmental impact, share or extend the life of computer resources, and participate in renewable energy programs or create local options to draw from.

Culture: Actions and issues that affect how communities manifest identity, preserve and cultivate traditions, and develop belief systems and commonly accepted values.

VISIONS

Loop Learning will maintain an open mind in exploring new approaches to sustainability in various professional fields. Challenging long-held norms and values when creating learning services should be carefully considered to ensure that diverse perspectives are included.

At the heart of Loop Learning’s mission is to change minds, attitudes, and behaviors around typical practice in various professions as it relates to sustainability. By equipping learners with an understanding of sustainability principles, this force of professionals can change the way an industry does its work.
MEANINGS & REACTIONS

While Loop Learning strives to provide learning solutions that are accessible and sensitive to diverse perspectives, the company realizes that no product will be ideal for all audiences. Dialogue and feedback from diverse audiences will be met with an open-mind and with a spirit of collaboration to improve products and seek new opportunities.

A SYSTEMIC VIEW

Loop Learning offers learners an opportunity to grow into their career goals. However, the company and instructors realize the transformational nature of education. The hope to provide a pathway to students to explore new avenues for their career. Adult learners often embark on a learning journey with one set of expectations and goals and the results can be very different and much more profound.

The hope is that the learning product takes each student on journey that emboldens them to see themselves in a different way and how they are part of something larger than themselves.

DIVERSITY

Loop Learning values diversity in its many forms. Diversity of persons, perspectives, and convictions helps to make us all stronger and it makes our communities better places to live. Intentional diversity in employees, students and collaborators will help further the mission of the company.

PRODUCTION

LEARNING PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Evaluation Design - This is a key first-step to ensure learning outcomes are tied to learning success. Customers and clients need to feed into this process at the start of a instructional design process. They key question is “What do businesses and professionals need (skills and knowledge) in order to leverage sustainable thinking in their work?”

Instructional Design - This step relies on industry and sustainability experts to produce a curriculum focused on the learning outcomes identified in the evaluation design step. Courses need to be more than knowledge acquisition. Critical thinking and application tasks need to be integrated into the curriculum to ensure significant learning is taking place for students.

Courseware Design (Learning Management System) - The courseware creation should be the execution of the identified client/customer needs and instructional design to accomplish those identified learning outcomes. The design and maintenance of the Learning Management System will be a significant cost, but one that is scalable once created. (Rosenberg 2017)

LEARNING PRODUCT DELIVERY

Customer Relationship System – This essential business function relies on utilizing a customer management system, such as Salesforce, to maintain records of prospective students and marketing efforts in order to track matriculation into Loop Learning customers. A robust CRM system can also aid in customer service and support once they become a customer.

Costs for a system geared toward a small business are charged per user.

Salesforce: $150/user/month = $1,800 annually per user
Cost grows as needs become more complex. (Salesforce 2017)
LOCATION

Work space – As previously discussed, Loop Learning embraces non-traditional work spaces. Because we live in the “cloud,” connected virtual employees can find suitable and flexible spaces to meet their needs. Initially, a work-from-home model would be used for the initial startup to reduce overhead costs.

As staff needs grow, a dedicated facility would be explored and developed. Inspiration would be drawn from places like the Celery Design Collaborative, that created a new studio/work space in Berkeley, California. The company partnered with Arkin-Tilt Architects to give new life to an industrial rug cleaning shop. The upcycling of many materials were used in structural and decor functions throughout the space to create an eclectic and functional space. (Arkin-Tilt Architects 2014)

Zoning and space type – As staff needs grow and an office location is required, Loop Learning will seek a location that can be revitalized with the hopes of a mixed use space. A mixed-use tenant space would ideally allow for resource sharing and encourage creative work and bring the natural environment inside — as well as bring employees outside.

Power and utilities – Loop Learning has a commitment to using renewable energy sources. While it might be nice to have on-site renewable energy systems (solar or wind), cooperatives should be explored first in order to support more efficient, large-scale systems of renewable energy generation. This would likely come in the form of buying into renewable energy programs, such as Xcel Energy’s Renewable Connect program. (Xcel Energy 2017) This could also help address remote energy needs for remote employees because they could buy into a similar program.

ACCESS

Access to Loop Learning’s facility should allow for foot, bicycle or public transportation commuting in an area close to options for housing. Access to an airport via public transportation should be prioritized for client interactions and employee visits.

Since customers will almost exclusively interact with the company through online channels, a robust customer “store front” is not needed.

An eye to physical accessibility should be incorporated into any design plans. This means that the experience for people with disabilities are considered as an integrated approach to a space design and utilization.

COST

The costs of initially running Loop Learning will be centered around developing the learning module, testing outcomes, and establishing the learning management system. Much of this work will not require permanent, full-time work. Because of this, a major investment in office space won’t be necessary. To offset the initial work done by experts, grant funding will be sought to help cover staff expenses.

Occupational Expenses - unsure
Rent - none
Website hosting – $500/year (www.ethicalhost.ca)
Web and digital app development – included in initial development investment
Insurance - Average cost: $1,281 per year; median cost: $584 per year
Customer service staffing – $35,000/year
Marketing coordination and staffing – $15,000/year
LEGAL ENVIRONMENT

After the business plan has been completed for Loop Learning, the next step is to submit the application to create the legal nonprofit. This application is to receive tax-exempt status and to allow the organization to fund raise in support of organization. Our example will use the state of Minnesota.

- Minnesota Nonprofit Corporation Articles of Incorporation
- Bylaws
- IRS Form SS-4: Apply for EIN
- IRS Form 1023: Application for 501(c)(3) Exemption
- IRS Determination Letter
- Form ABR: Minnesota Revenue Application for Business Registration
- Form ST16: Minnesota Revenue Application for Sales and Use Tax Exempt Status
- Minnesota Charitable Organization Initial Registration & Annual Report Form, if required

Estimated nonprofit incorporation fee is about $1,000 (Harbor Compliance 2017)

To help with legal and financial assistance, joining an organization such as the MN Council of Nonprofits would be considered (www.minnesotanonprofits.org).


Unsure if bonding is necessary for Loop Learning. Further exploration needed.

PERSONNEL

Learning loop will need a variety of skills in order to launch and be successful. As with most nonprofits, a board of directors would be recruited to establish governance and advise the direction of the company on a volunteer basis. Many of the positions will be on a product development team. This team would not be permanent, but exist on a contracted project basis. The other team would be part of the maintenance team. This team would focus work around up-keep, customer service, marketing, and management.

Board of directors (volunteer)

- President
- Vice president
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Past president

Product Development Team (top-level staff)

- Executive director
- Director of education and assessment
- Director of sustainable design
- App and web development contracting

Maintenance Team

- Customer service
- IT/development
- Legal consultation
INVENTORY
Loop Learning’s commitment to living and operating in a digital environment means very little physical product will exist. There will likely be some physical marketing materials needed. Computer and server infrastructure also will need to be maintained.

SUPPLIERS
Outside contractors will exist mostly to advise and provide staffing to develop product learning modules. However, the main suppliers would be data and web hosting services. Like Loop Learning’s commitment to finding renewable energy resources, the company would see to partner with hosting companies that offset their service’s energy needs through renewable energy programs.

An example of this type of company is Ethical Hosting. A Canadian web hosting company, they provide services for small to medium companies. This is an example of the type of hosting Loop Learning would look to partner with.

**Ethical Hosting**
501-639 Dupont St
Toronto, Ontario
www.ethicalhost.ca
sales@EthicalHost.ca

(Ethical Hosting 2017)

CREDIT POLICIES
Loop Learning does not accept payments on credit. Payment via PayPal or credit/debit will be accepted online for subscription services. For subscription services, a reoccurring payment that fails will put the account into unpaid status within 30 days unless a payment is updated. Access to learning tools will be locked out after the 30 days.

For managing accounts payable, check runs will be setup twice a month. For regular vendors, check to see if early discounts apply. Otherwise, set a schedule for invoices to be paid based on the terms provided on the invoice to ensure that early payment isn't depleting the organization of cash flow and creating problems. This process will help with budget forecasts to help with financial decision making by the executive director and leadership team.
Management And Organization

Below is an organizational chart to show the initial structure for Loop Learning established as a nonprofit entity.
PROFESSIONAL AND ADVISORY SUPPORT

• Board of directors - The board of directors would provide oversight for the nonprofit. They would consist of at least five volunteers: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and past president. Sub-committees would form as voted on by the full board. The bylaws would require at least two full meetings of the board annually with the budget receiving approval at one of those meetings.

• Management advisory board – Loop Learning would work to draw advice and resources from partner organizations that might have a stake in the success of Loop Learning. Some of those organizations that could be partnered with would include AIGA Minnesota, International Society of Sustainability Professionals, individuals from design firms, and corporate sustainability professionals.

• Attorney – Loop Learning will partner with legal associates that share all or part of the company’s values. One of those partners might be Legal for Good based in St. Louis Park, Minnesota. They specialize in helping to form and set up the necessary aspects of a nonprofit organization. Legal for Good also subscribes to a broad value of sustainability as it relates to people and culture. They also embrace diversity, responsible stewardship, and accountability. Learn more at legalforgood.com. (Legal for Good 2017)

Legal For Good PLLC
5354 Parkdale Dr., Suite 103
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

• Accountant – Using the MN Council of Nonprofits as a resource, Loop Learning has engaged BWK Rogers PC to provide accounting and auditing services.

BWK Rogers PC
431 South Seventh Street, Suite 2424
Minneapolis, MN 55415

• Insurance agent – Using the MN Council of Nonprofits (MN Council of Nonprofits 2017) as a resource, Loop Learning has engaged Bremer Insurance to assist with financial services.

Bremer Insurance
633 Concord Street South
South Saint Paul, MN 55075

• Banker – Using the MN Council of Nonprofits (MN Council of Nonprofits 2017) as a resource, Loop Learning has engaged Bremer Bank to assist with financial services.

Bremer Bank
225 6th Street South, Suite 200
Minneapolis, MN 55402

• Consultant or consultants

Web / digital design partner - Loop Learning would seek out a firm or developer that works under standards that help the company meet its zero impact goal. The ideal firms or developer would have experience working with carbon neutrality certification for site development. (Web Neutral Project 2017)
STARTUP EXPENSES AND CAPITALIZATION

The initial development of the learning product and certification testing program will take a large amount of initial capital to launch and develop. This work includes:

- Development of learning outcomes
- Development of curriculum to support learning outcomes
- Development of learning environment with app/web developer
- Development of support for learning environment
- Development of testing material and testing experience. This might be outsourced to a testing company to ensure high-quality standards are met.

These expenses will need to be supported by a capital investment to enable Loop Learning to then provide paid learning subscriptions and testing services to establish cash flow.

START-UP EXPENSES

LEARNING MODULE DESIGN AND MEASUREMENT DEVELOPMENT

- Learning design — $50-$100 per hour
- Learning evaluation — $50-$150 per hour (Jarchie 2007)

The number of hours required for course design and development can range widely depending on several factors, including media rich experiences and developing interactive experiences. This range can start at 70 hours and go up to 600 hours. However, the average is 250 hours. (University of Minnesota 2017)

To provide startup cost estimates, Loop Learning will target a need of 250 hours at $75 per hour for the full learning module development — $18,750

To provide creation of the certification testing content, Loop Learning will estimate half that time with the assumption that learning outcomes will already have been created through the initial curriculum development. At the same rate established above, the cost for the certification testing content the cost is estimated at $9,375.

DEVELOPMENT OF LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Application Development for both iOS and Android — $78,500 (Crew 2017)

Note: This includes creating an learning management system to aid in reducing the cost of developing new learning content.

To put start-up costs into perspective, university and college online degree programs typically find cost of starting a new online degree program to be at least $10,000 per credit hour for a master’s degree program. A 30-credit master’s degree program can cost up to $300,000. (Campus Technology 2004) Having components already in place, like a learning management system, can significantly reduce this cost.
LEARNING MODULE SUPPORT

The learning module support program will provide learners with assistance as they navigate the learning module and pre-test material. It will also coordinate and assist with the certification testing process.

The initial creation of this system will be essential to properly support learners and create a positive customer experience. Part of this work includes testing the learning module and participate in the continual quality improvement process.

The estimate for hourly contracting in this area for analysis and formulation is $75-$150 per hour. (Jarchie 2007)

Based on the estimates for course development, Loop Learning estimates a need for about 100 hours of support program development. At an estimated $100 per hour, it would require an investment of $10,000.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning module development</td>
<td>$18,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of learning environment</td>
<td>$78,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning module support development</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL PRODUCT START-UP INVESTMENT</strong></td>
<td><strong>$107,250</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product start-up</td>
<td>$107,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal (incorporation and trademark)</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>$600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payroll</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer and IT Infrastructure</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office supplies</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc and other</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL STARTUP</strong></td>
<td><strong>$112,850</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FUNDING OVERVIEW FOR LOOP LEARNING START-UP

START-UP FUNDING

Start-up Expenses to Fund $92,850
Start-up Assets to Fund $20,000

TOTAL FUNDING REQUIRED $112,850

Assets $0
Non-cash Assets from Start-up $0
Cash Requirements from Start-up $25,000
Additional Cash Raised $0
Cash Balance on Starting Date $25,000

TOTAL ASSETS $25,000

LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL

Liabilities $0
Current Borrowing $0
Long-term Liabilities $0
Accounts Payable (Outstanding Bills) $0
Other Current Liabilities (interest-free) $0

TOTAL LIABILITIES $0

CAPITAL

Planned Investment
Founding Directors $15,000
Private and Corporate Investors $25,000
Grants $80,000
Additional Investment Requirement $0

TOTAL PLANNED INVESTMENT $120,000

Loss at Start-up (Start-up Expenses) ($25,000)

TOTAL CAPITAL $95,000
TOTAL CAPITAL AND LIABILITIES $95,000
Total Funding $120,000
CAPITALIZATION
Loop Learning will be established as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation and, thus, has no owners or shareholders. A nonprofit corporation has no owners, only stakeholders. A stakeholder is not an owner, but rather someone who has a stake in the successful operation of the organization. Stakeholders could be members of the nonprofit, or even beneficiaries of the nonprofit’s activities. If Loop Learning dissolves, any net surplus will be transferred to another nonprofit determined by the board of directors. (Foundation Group 2015)

Financial oversight and governance review will be the responsibility of the board of directors. The board also will hold responsibility for review and hiring/firing of the executive director.

PERSONAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Not included in this plan.
The financial plan consists of a 12-month profit and loss projection, a cash-flow projection, a projected balance sheet, and a break-even calculation. The information contained are estimates compiled from the best available information at the time of creation.

**TWELVE-MONTH PROFIT AND LOSS PROJECTION**

The following 12-month plan shows the initial investment in grant money and investment. The corresponding investment in the initial learning module and environment are reflected. See the start-up expenses for a more detailed view of what is included in that number.

### Loop Learning

12-month projection

8-Dec-18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual</th>
<th>Revenue</th>
<th>$ 23,520.00</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning Module Subscription</td>
<td>$ 23,520.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-Testing Module Subscription</td>
<td>$ 10,450.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exam Testing Fee</td>
<td>$ 35,750.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Initial Investment / Grant Funding</td>
<td>$ 120,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Monthly Revenue</strong></td>
<td>$ 189,720.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ANNUAL REVENUE</strong></td>
<td>$ 189,720.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual</th>
<th>Expenses</th>
<th>$ 175,782.00</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Initial Startup Investment</td>
<td>$ 112,850.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>$ 34,992.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>$ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Website hosting</td>
<td>$ 540.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Web development (ongoing)</td>
<td>$ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>$ 600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salesforce</td>
<td>$ 1,800.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contracting (marketing)</td>
<td>$ 25,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td>$ 175,782.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ANNUAL EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td>$ 175,782.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual</th>
<th>Montly Net</th>
<th>$ 13,938.00</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>ANNUAL NET</strong></td>
<td>$ 13,938.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PROJECTED CASH FLOW

The projected cash flow anticipates a slow growth after marketing efforts start to take affect and after the development phase has been in the works. This estimate assumes that at least a beta product is available on day one of operations and is ready for a sales team to start working.

Most revenue is paid monthly. As long as sales goals are met, cash flow should stabilize within 6-months. The monthly sales goals for product component are at the top of the chart. Attaining these goals should allow for expenses to be covered and for a modest amount of investment money remaining as well as a flexible cushion to pay for unanticipated expenses.
OPENING DAY BALANCE SHEET

Loop Learning
Opening Day Balance Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Assets</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bank</td>
<td>$35,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts Receivable</td>
<td>$ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant</td>
<td>$80,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventory</td>
<td>$ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed Assets</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Assets</td>
<td>$ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Assets</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$ -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL ASSETS** $125,000.00

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Liabilities</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounts Payable</td>
<td>$112,850.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax</td>
<td>$ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit Line</td>
<td>$ -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Long-Term Liabilities</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bank Loan</td>
<td>$ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortgage</td>
<td>$ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Loans</td>
<td>$ -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL LIABILITIES** $112,850.00

**LIABILITIES & ASSETS**

| NET TOTAL | $12,150.00 |

BREAK-EVEN ANALYSIS

A complete program and completion of the certification is considered 3-months of learning, 2-months of test prep, and one exam test. The total cost for this product is $446. Since the cost of delivery is very scalable, there isn’t a significant increase in cost to add users. Variable costs were defined as 30%.

Loop Learning
Break Even Costs

Looking at complete certification $446 for an average completion time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Break even sales #</th>
<th>= Fixed Costs</th>
<th>Product Cost</th>
<th>Variable Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>563</td>
<td>$175,782.00</td>
<td>$446.00</td>
<td>$133.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Situation**

Despite working to keep a low profile regarding workers, rental space, and energy needs — Loop Learning has significant start-up costs before it can start to achieve income from selling its online/app learning module system. The company believes that the sustainability certification can augment professionals and make them better equipped to meet current and future business challenges.

Since the biggest hurdle to starting a healthy cash flow for Loop Learning is the startup costs (cost of creating the curriculum, learning environment, and digital learning application), the money should be raised through a combination of grants and fundraising.

**Target**

Funding goal: Raise $100,000 to $120,000 of initial money to fund the creation of the learning program and digital app for Android/iOS users. Through this grant consider offering open source access to other nonprofits with sustainability directives.

Maintain low–operating costs by using flexible space options for staff.

**Proposal**

An annual sales budget of $150,000 to $200,000 would need to be maintained to pay for additional staff and ongoing marketing efforts. This could be reduced by not adding as much staff and reducing the marketing efforts. However, this could stunt the overall growth rate for the company.

Other options for funding and business development could be explored. This could include:

- **Corporate and business partnership building:** The executive team and board should work to build partnerships to raise capital and to find ways to partner with organizations with a need for sustainable programming.

- **Nonprofit partnerships:** Look for partnerships with other nonprofits with a sustainable focus to work on building learning programs for their use to be distributed through Loop Learning.

**CONCLUSION**

This business plan concludes that unless initial funding can be arranged to pay for the development of a customer-ready learning module, it would not be prudent to launch Loop Learning. A partnership seems to be the best way to help with funding as well as validation and trust development in the market’s perspective.

As discussed, partnering with an established organization such as AIGA could help to add weight to the program and create a built-in audience interested in professional development.

Another strategy might be to dig deeper to find partnerships with companies that already have learning platforms that are customizable. This could result in a much lower startup threshold for Loop Learning.
WORKS CITED


ASU Online. 2017. Tour an ASU Online Class.


Michael Horn, Amber Laxton, Yury Lifshits. n.d. 10 Trends Ahead for Continuing Education. Entangled Solutions, Self published.


Images

Cover: AdobeStock.com #95451592, standard license