L1 Visa Business Plan Sample: Structure and Common Reasons for RFEs

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This L1 visa business plan sample shows what an immigration officer expects when a company transfers a manager, an executive, or a specialized knowledge worker to the United States. The plan isn't a sales pitch. It's evidence, and the officer reads every page against two tests: is there a real qualifying relationship between the two companies, and is the job really at the level the petition claims.

Below you'll find the structure that working L1 plans follow, plus the weak spots that draw Requests for Evidence. If you're writing the plan yourself, treat the structure as your checklist; if you're hiring a writer, use it to judge what you get.

An L1 plan connects the two companies and the job into one documented story.

1. Why the L1 Plan Is Evidence, Not a Pitch

A loan business plan tries to excite a lender. An L1 business plan tries to convince a skeptical government officer. Every claim needs a document behind it, and every number must trace back to something the company can actually show.

The petition is filed on Form I 129, with the business plan traveling as supporting evidence. The officer isn't reading to learn about your vision. They're answering two questions: does a qualifying relationship exist between the two companies, and does the beneficiary's job really qualify as executive, managerial, or specialized knowledge. When a plan reads like marketing copy, both answers get harder to give, and that's when the officer reaches for an RFE form.

2. The L1 Visa Business Plan Sample Structure, Section by Section

Here's the sample structure, with what each part must contain.

Executive summary. The companies, the beneficiary, the US job, and the outcome the plan supports. Keep it factual.

Foreign company background. What the overseas company does, how long it has operated, its staff, revenue, and ownership. This foundation needs real numbers.

Qualifying relationship. The exact ownership and control link between the two companies: parent, subsidiary, affiliate, or branch. Name the shareholders and the percentages, and attach the documents that prove it.

US company and office. What the US entity does, where it operates, and for new offices, what is already in place: the lease, the premises, the first hires. New offices get extra scrutiny, so this section works hardest.

Job description. The beneficiary's duties in the US, written to prove the job level. This is the section most RFEs attack.

Organizational chart and staffing plan. Who the beneficiary supervises, who they report to, and how headcount grows over five years. Titles, numbers, and a timeline.

Five year financial projections. Revenue, payroll, and expenses built from stated assumptions, tied to the staffing plan. The officer checks that the money can pay the promised headcount.

Supporting documents index. Every exhibit behind the claims: corporate records, leases, tax returns, payroll records, contracts.

3. The Qualifying Relationship and the One Year Rule

Two facts make or break the petition before the job description is even read. The first is the qualifying relationship: the foreign and US companies must be linked as parent and subsidiary, as affiliates under common ownership and control, or as branch offices of the same company. Saying the two companies are partners or work closely together isn't enough. The officer wants the ownership documents: share certificates, operating agreements, corporate filings. If the paperwork doesn't show common control, the relationship fails the test.

The second is the one year rule. The beneficiary must have worked for the foreign company for one continuous year in the three years before the petition. Continuous means unbroken: short stints, long gaps, or time spent mostly in the US don't count the way some petitioners hope they will. Pay slips and employment letters covering the full period are the standard proof.

A weak plan describes the relationship in warm language and moves on. A strong plan states the ownership percentages, names the documents, and points to them in the exhibits.

4. Job Descriptions That Actually Prove the Job Level

Here's where most L1 plans fall apart. The officer doesn't care about the title. They care about what the person actually does all day, and generic duties like managing operations and overseeing staff don't survive scrutiny.

For L1A managers and executives, the duties must show the person directs the organization or a major part of it, supervises professionals or manages an essential function, and holds real authority over hiring, budgets, or strategy. List the decisions they make and the budgets they control.

For L1B specialized knowledge workers, the plan must show the knowledge is uncommon and specific to the company: its proprietary systems, products, and processes. Ordinary professional skill, even at a high level, isn't specialized knowledge. Explain what makes the knowledge rare and why the US operation can't get it from the local labor market. You can't prove this with general praise. You prove it with specifics about the systems only this person understands and the problems only they can solve.

Pair the duties with an organizational chart showing titles, headcounts, and reporting lines above and below the beneficiary. An executive with no one under them and no one over them except the owner reads as a title, not a job. The chart is where the job description becomes believable.

5. Five Year Projections That Match the Staffing Plan

Projections in an L1 plan do one job: show the US company can afford the growth the petition promises. If the staffing plan says 25 people by year five, the numbers must pay for 25 people. When the two sections disagree, the officer notices right away.

State every assumption plainly. How many clients, at what average contract value, with what payment timing. How salaries rise each year. A projection with no stated assumptions reads as made up, because to the officer that's what it is. Conservative numbers with honest assumptions beat big numbers with none. Our business plans service ties every projection line to the staffing plan, so the numbers agree with the petition.

Illustrative five year staffing sample

Illustrative sample only. Your staffing numbers will differ.

6. Common RFE Reasons, and How to Fix Each One

Officers issue RFEs on L1 petitions for a short list of recurring reasons. Here they are, with the fix for each.

Qualifying relationship described but not documented. The fix: ownership percentages, the names of the shared owners, and the corporate documents in the exhibits.

Job duties copied from a generic template. Phrases like responsible for overall management could describe anyone. The fix is company specific duties with numbers.

The org chart and the staffing plan disagree: three employees on the chart, fifteen promised by year two. The fix is simple and often missed. Make all three say the same thing.

Projections with no stated assumptions. Revenue appears from nowhere and grows forever. The fix is a short assumption list under the numbers.

A new office with no office. The petition says operations begin soon, but there's no lease, no photos, no address, and no first hire. The fix is proof of what exists today plus a dated timeline.

Specialized knowledge that reads as ordinary skill. The plan calls ten years of industry experience specialized. The fix is to show what is proprietary: the systems, products, and processes that exist only inside this company. If you want the plan checked against this list before it reaches the officer, our business plan help for immigration cases reviews the evidence line by line. Tell us about your case through the contact page.

An L1 petition lives or dies on evidence, and the business plan is where that evidence hangs together as one story. The relationship, the job, the office, the staffing, and the money all have to point the same way. Work through the structure above, fix the weak spots before the officer finds them, and let the plan answer every question before it's asked.

Need an L1 plan that survives an RFE?

Bright Quill writes immigration ready business plans: documented qualifying relationships, duty descriptions matched to the petition, and projections with stated assumptions.