

Drone photography business plan

A working plan for an aerial photo and video business. Replace each prompt with your own answers and delete anything you don't need.

Business name

Owner

Service area

Version / date

How to use this plan

Work through one section at a time and keep answers short and specific. A two-page plan you revisit every quarter is more useful than a long one you never reopen. Leave amounts blank until you have real quotes or numbers. This template is a starting point, not legal, tax or financial advice. Requirements differ by location and business — check what applies to you, and have a qualified professional review your terms if you're unsure.

01 Executive summary

The business in one sentence

What you do, for whom, and where. For example: "Aerial photo and video for real estate agents and builders in _____ County."

The opportunity

Why customers in your area need this now, and what you've heard from them directly.

Goals for the next 12 months

Two or three measurable goals — revenue, jobs per month, number of repeat clients.

02 Services

Start with a short list you can deliver well. Add services once you have demand and the right equipment.

Service	What the client gets	Deliverables	Turnaround
Real estate aerial photos			
Aerial and walkthrough video			
Construction progress documentation			
Roof and property inspection imagery			
Mapping and orthomosaics			
Event and promotional aerals			

What you won't offer (yet)

Work you'll refer out or add later, and why.

03 Target customers and markets

Rank the segments you'll focus on first. Fewer segments, served well, usually beats trying to reach everyone.

Segment	What they need	How you'll reach them	Priority
Real estate agents and brokerages			
Home builders and developers			
Construction and engineering firms			
Roofing, solar and inspection companies			

Segment	What they need	How you'll reach them	Priority
Property managers and HOAs			
Event venues and planners			
Tourism, hospitality and local businesses			
Service area (cities, counties or radius)		First ten customers you'll contact (list separately)	

04 Competition and positioning

Who else serves these customers?

Other drone operators, ground photographers who add aerials, and in-house teams.

How you'll stand out

Turnaround, quality, specialization, reliability, communication, or a service others don't offer.

05 Pricing approach

Pricing model

Per project, per package, hourly or day rate, or a retainer for recurring work such as monthly construction updates. Start from your cost per job and target margin, then compare with the market — not the other way around.

Package or service	Price	What's included	Cost to deliver

06 Equipment

List what you own and what you still need. Include spares — a dead battery or broken propeller can end a job.

Item	Purpose	Cost	Status
Primary drone			
Backup drone			
Batteries and charging hub			
Filters (ND / polarizer)			
Controller, tablet or screen			
Ground camera and lenses			
Editing computer and storage			
Software (editing, mapping, flight logs)			
Cases, landing pad and safety gear			
Total equipment			

07 Operations and compliance

Prompts only — confirm current requirements with the relevant aviation authority, your insurer and a local professional.

- ☐ Pilot certification
In the US, commercial drone pilots need a Remote Pilot Certificate under FAA Part 107. Note your certificate number and recurrent training date.
- ☐ Drone registration
Registration numbers for each aircraft and where they're marked, if required where you fly.

- ☐ **Airspace checks and authorizations**
How you check airspace before each job and request authorization (for example, LAANC) when needed — check your local requirements.
- ☐ **Insurance**
Liability and equipment coverage. Ask an insurance professional what fits your services and client contracts.
- ☐ **Pre-flight checklist and flight logs**
Weather, site survey, equipment checks, and how you record each flight.
- ☐ **Privacy and data handling**
How you avoid capturing people and neighboring property unnecessarily, and how client files are stored and deleted.
- ☐ **Business registration, licenses and taxes**
Confirm what your city, state and accountant require.

Weather and no-fly policy

Conditions that cancel a flight, who decides, and how rescheduling works.

08 **Marketing plan**

Channel	Actions	Monthly budget	Goal
Website and portfolio			
Google Business Profile			
Social media (short aerial clips)			
Direct outreach to agents and builders			
Referrals and partnerships			
Local associations and networking			

Launch plan

How you'll land your first paying clients — portfolio shoots, introductory offers, or partnering with a ground photographer.

09 Startup costs

One-time costs to get running. Use real quotes where you can.

Item	Estimated cost	Notes
Drones and accessories		
Camera and editing equipment		
Software (first year)		
Certification and training		
Insurance (first payment)		
Business registration and setup		
Website, domain and branding		
Launch marketing		
Reserve for repairs and slow months		
		Total startup costs

10 Monthly operating costs

Item	Monthly cost	Notes
Software subscriptions		
Insurance		
Phone and internet		
Marketing and advertising		
Vehicle and fuel		
Cloud storage and file delivery		
Equipment repair and replacement fund		
Bookkeeping and accounting		
Owner pay		
Other		

Total monthly costs

11 Revenue goals worksheet

Work out how many jobs a month you need, then check that it fits your schedule.

Line	Your number
A. Monthly operating costs (section 10)	
B. Monthly profit goal	
C. Revenue needed per month (A + B)	
D. Average price per job	
E. Jobs needed per month (C ÷ D)	
F. Jobs you can realistically complete per week	
G. Monthly capacity (F × about 4.3 weeks)	
H. Gap (G – E) — if negative, raise prices, add capacity or lower costs	

12 Milestones

Milestone	Target date	Status
Certification and registration complete		
Insurance in place		
Equipment purchased and tested		
Portfolio shoots completed		
Website and booking process live		
First paying client		
Reach ____ jobs per month		
Review pricing and this plan		