

A Business Plan for an Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre

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ABSTRAKT

Tato práce představuje podnikatelský plán pro Centrum zooterapie ve Zlíně. Cílem centra je poskytovat terapeutické služby s asistencí certifikovaných zvířat, vzdělávací workshopy a fyzioterapii pro zvířata, se zaměřením na pohodu lidí i zvířat. Teoretická část se věnuje klíčovým pojmům podnikání a tvorby podnikatelského plánu, zatímco praktická část aplikuje tyto poznatky na analýzu trhu, struktury, financí a rizik navrhovaného podniku..

Klíčová slova: zooterapie, podnikatelský plán, analýza, holistická péče

ABSTRACT

This thesis presents a business plan for an Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre in Zlín, Czech Republic. The centre aims to provide therapeutic services with certified therapy animals, educational workshops, and animal physiotherapy, focusing on human and animal well-being. The theoretical part outlines key concepts of entrepreneurship and business planning, while the practical section applies this knowledge to assess the proposed business's market, structure, finances, and risks.

Keywords: animal-assisted therapy, business plan, analysis, holistic care

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been growing interest in alternative and holistic approaches to health and well-being. One of the areas gaining increasing attention is animal-assisted therapy (AAT). This method integrates the natural bond between humans and animals into therapeutic processes to support physical and mental health. Researchers are demonstrating the positive impact of animal-assisted therapy across diverse populations, from children with developmental challenges to seniors experiencing loneliness or emotional distress. Despite its proven benefits, many regions of the Czech Republic, particularly the Zlín area, still lack adequate animal-assisted therapy services.

This thesis presents a comprehensive business plan for establishing an Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre in Zlín, designed to fill this gap in the market. The centre aims to offer a professional, safe, and supportive environment where individuals can benefit from therapy sessions involving trained animals under the guidance of healthcare professionals. In addition to therapeutic services, the centre will provide educational workshops and animal physiotherapy, further enriching its value to the community.

The thesis is divided into two main parts. The theoretical part explores essential concepts related to entrepreneurship, starting a business, and the structure and purpose of a business plan. The practical part then applies these concepts to the development of the Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre, including market analysis, financial planning, and risk evaluation. The goal is to demonstrate the proposed business's feasibility and long-term sustainability while emphasising its potential social impact.

I THEORETICAL PART

1 ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurship plays a vital role in the development of modern economies and societies. It encompasses identifying market opportunities, mobilising resources, and launching innovative solutions that bring value to consumers and communities. Entrepreneurs create new jobs and foster economic dynamism, particularly by developing small and medium-sized enterprises central to many national economies, including the Czech Republic (Burns 2016, p. 7).

Successful entrepreneurship requires a blend of vision, strategic planning, and the willingness to take calculated risks. Entrepreneurs must develop a business idea, conduct market research, create financial projections, and implement operational strategies. At the same time, they need to build critical competencies in leadership, communication, and customer relationship management to navigate competitive markets effectively (Scarborough 2016, p. 42).

In the case of the Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre, entrepreneurship is demonstrated through the creation of a unique and socially valuable service that responds to unmet needs in the local area. The centre offers an innovative approach that combines healthcare with animal therapy to address mental and physical well-being. This business is also rooted in personal motivation, reflecting the founder's professional background in nursing and deep passion for animal (Frews.cz 2024).

Entrepreneurship is not solely about starting a business but also a mindset focused on innovation, opportunity, and adaptability. Entrepreneurs must balance creativity with practical planning and continuously seek ways to improve and grow their ventures in dynamic environments (Barringer and Ireland 2016, p. 33).

1.1 Entrepreneur

An entrepreneur is an individual who identifies a market opportunity and takes the initiative to organise and manage resources to turn that idea into a functioning business. Entrepreneurs are often considered innovators and problem solvers, driven to create value through a new service, product, or business model. Their role is central to business development and economic progress, as they contribute to employment, innovation, and competitiveness in both local and global markets (Hisrich, Peters, and Shepherd 2016, p. 8).

Entrepreneurs typically exhibit specific personal characteristics, such as independence, risk tolerance, creativity, and strong motivation. These traits enable them to operate effectively, navigate uncertain environments, and make strategic decisions that influence the direction and success of their business. However, an entrepreneur also requires diverse practical skills, including financial planning, market analysis, leadership, and communication (Evans 2016, p. 11).

In the case of small business ventures, such as service-based enterprises or sole proprietorships, the entrepreneur is often responsible for all aspects of business management—from planning and financing to marketing and customer service. This is especially true in sectors where the entrepreneur's expertise is central to the value of the business, such as healthcare, consulting, or animal-assisted therapy (Stokes & Wilson 2017, p. 95).

The entrepreneur is the founder of a business and navigates challenges, adapts to change, and steers the venture toward sustainability and growth (Frederick et al. 2016, p. 28).

1.2 Business Environment

The business environment includes all internal and external elements that impact a company's ability to function and succeed. These factors shape business strategies, affect decision-making processes, and assess the potential risks and opportunities within a market. For entrepreneurs, understanding the environment in which their business operates is crucial for sustainability and growth (Armstrong et al. 2017, p. 104).

The business environment is typically divided into two categories: the internal environment, which includes the company's resources, structure, and culture, and the external environment, which includes elements the business cannot control but must respond to. The external environment can be further categorised into key components (Armstrong et al. 2017, p. 104).:

- Geographical factors – These influence logistics and operations, such as transport infrastructure, regional accessibility, and distribution channels (Armstrong et al. 2017, p. 105).

- Social factors – Social expectations, demographic trends, and the impact of business activity on the community are all important. A business should aim to contribute positively to the society it serves (Armstrong et al. 2017, p. 105).
- Political factors – Political stability and government policy can directly affect businesses' legal and regulatory framework (Armstrong et al. 2017, p. 106).
- Legal factors – Laws and regulations define the boundaries of acceptable business conduct. In the Czech Republic, this includes legislation such as the Civil Code, which outlines legal conditions for business operations (Armstrong et al. 2017, p. 106).
- Economic factors include inflation, interest rates, unemployment levels, and market cycles. Under these economic conditions, businesses must manage relationships with banks, suppliers, and customers (Armstrong et al. 2017, p. 107).
- Environmental factors – Environmental concerns and ecological regulations increasingly affect businesses. Companies are expected to comply with eco-friendly standards, which may increase costs and open new market opportunities (Armstrong et al. 2017, p. 107).
- Technological factors – Advances in technology offer businesses new ways to innovate, streamline operations, and enhance productivity. Staying up to date with digital trends is essential for competitiveness (Armstrong et al., 2017, p. 108).
- Ethical factors – Ethical behaviour in business includes transparency, fair competition, truthful advertising, and consumer respect. Maintaining ethical standards improves reputation and long-term success (Armstrong et al. 2017, p. 108).
- Cultural-historical factors—A region's education level, cultural values, and historical background influence the workforce, consumer behaviour, and acceptance of new ideas or products (Armstrong et al., 2017, p. 108).

In addition, businesses today are influenced by European and global environments. The Czech Republic, as an EU member state, participates in the single market, which facilitates the unrestricted flow of goods, services, capital, and people. This integration increases competition, drives innovation, and improves service quality, as companies must continuously adapt to meet rising consumer expectations (Armstrong et al. 2017, p. 109).

A thorough understanding of the business environment enables entrepreneurs to anticipate risks, adjust strategies, and take advantage of new opportunities, helping them

maintain resilience and long-term success in a dynamic and competitive landscape (Frederick et al. 2016, p. 33).

2 ESTABLISHING A BUSINESS

Establishing a business involves the legal and administrative process of transforming a business idea into an operating entity. This includes selecting an appropriate legal form, registering the company, obtaining necessary licenses or permits, and establishing finance, taxation, and operations systems. Entrepreneurs must choose the structure that best fits their goals, whether as a natural person, a legal entity, or a partnership. Each form has its own legal, tax, and operational implications. In the Czech Republic, this process is governed by national legislation, including the Trade Licensing Act and the Civil Code (Evans 2016, p. 21).

2.1 Business of a Natural Person

A natural person may conduct business as a sole proprietor, commonly called a sole trader. In this structure, the business is owned and managed by a single individual fully responsible for its operations, obligations, and liabilities. It is among the most widely used business forms, especially among small-scale service providers or freelance professionals (Evans 2016, p. 42).

In the Czech Republic, the operation of a business as a natural person is regulated by the Trade Licensing Act. To obtain a trade license, the applicant must meet basic conditions, including a minimum age of 18, full legal capacity, and a clean criminal record. Once these requirements are fulfilled, the business can be registered with the relevant Trade Licensing Office (BusinessInfo.cz 2023).

According to legal requirements, trades are classified into various categories based on the qualifications required:

- Unqualified (free) trades – These require only general eligibility criteria to be met. Examples include retail trade, consultancy, administrative services, and event organising (Evans 2016, p. 44).
- Craft trades – These require vocational training or professional experience in a specific field. Examples include baking, carpentry, tailoring, and plumbing (Evans 2016, p. 44).
- Professional trades—These require specific qualifications or certifications and are often regulated by law. Examples include tax consultancy, physiotherapy, and veterinary services (Evans 2016, p. 44).

- Permitted (licensed) trades – These require specific qualifications and permission from the relevant authority. Trades in this category include road freight transport, security services, or the operation of medical or funeral establishments (Evans 2016, p. 44).

The main advantages of operating as a natural person are the simplicity of setup and lower administrative burden. However, it is important to note that the entrepreneur assumes full liability for all business obligations, meaning personal assets may be at risk in the case of business failure (Evans 2016, p. 44).

2.2 Business of a Legal Entity

Entrepreneurs must be prepared for more complex administration and stricter legal requirements when operating a business as a legal entity. In most cases, establishing a legal entity involves registering the company in the public register and, depending on the type of company, depositing a required amount of registered capital. Although the initial setup is more demanding than operating as a natural person, legal entities offer advantages such as limited liability, greater credibility, and easier access to external financing (Abrams 2019, p. 84).

All legal entities become entitled to conduct business once registered in the relevant public register. The specific type of legal form chosen depends on the business's goals, size, and structure (Abrams 2019, p. 84).

2.2.1 Partnership

A partnership is a form of business where two or more individuals cooperate to pursue joint business activity. The Czech Republic divides partnerships into general commercial and limited partnerships. In a general partnership, each partner holds full liability for the business's obligations. In contrast, a limited partnership requires at least one partner with unlimited liability and one with liability limited to their contribution (Frederick et al. 2016, p. 119).

Partnerships are relatively easy to form and operate, often based on personal trust and mutual agreement. They allow entrepreneurs to combine skills, resources, and responsibilities while sharing risks and profits. However, success depends significantly on clear communication and legal agreements between partners (Frederick et al. 2016, p. 120).

2.2.2 Capital Companies

Capital companies represent a more advanced legal form of business where ownership is based on capital contributions rather than personal participation. In the Czech Republic, the two main types are limited liability and joint-stock companies. Limited liability companies are popular due to their flexible structure, low minimum capital requirement, and owners' non-personal liability for company debts (Abrams 2019, p. 85).

In contrast, a joint-stock company is typically used for larger enterprises and allows for raising capital by issuing shares. This form requires a more complex structure, including a board of directors and a supervisory board. While capital companies involve more regulatory responsibilities, they offer benefits such as credibility, scalability, and limited liability for shareholders (Abrams 2019, p. 86).

2.2.3 Cooperatives

A cooperative is a legal entity formed by individuals who voluntarily come together to achieve shared economic, cultural, or social goals. Cooperatives operate on principles of mutual support and democratic control, where each member has one vote regardless of the size of their investment. In the Czech Republic, cooperatives are commonly used in agriculture, housing, and crafts (Evans 2016, p. 102).

The main advantages of cooperatives include shared risk, member participation, and a focus on long-term community benefit rather than short-term profit. However, the cooperative model may involve slower decision-making processes and challenges balancing member interests (Evans, 2016, p. 103).

2.2.4 European Legal Forms of Entrepreneurship

The European Union has introduced several supranational legal forms to support cross-border business activity. These include the European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG), designed to facilitate cooperation between companies from different EU member states without creating a complete legal merger. Another option is the European Company (Societas Europaea – SE), which allows businesses to operate across EU borders under a single European legal identity (Frederick et al. 2016, p. 152).

The European Cooperative Society (SCE) also supports transnational cooperative activity and enables individuals or legal entities from different EU countries to collaborate under shared principles. These forms are beneficial for companies planning to expand

beyond national borders and streamline legal administration within the EU's internal market (Frederick et al. 2016, p. 153).

3 BUSINESS PLAN

A business plan outlines the vision, structure, and practical steps for launching and managing a business. It gives the entrepreneur a clear decision-making framework and helps manage risks and opportunities. A well-prepared business plan is crucial in securing financial support, attracting investors, and communicating the business idea to stakeholders. It includes details about the company's goals, services or products, market positioning, financial projections, and organisational structure (Barringer and Ireland 2016, 111).

The business plan also helps entrepreneurs clarify their ideas, define their vision, and develop a strategy for achieving business goals. It encourages critical thinking, highlights potential obstacles, and ensures that all essential aspects of the business—financial, legal, operational, and marketing—are addressed before the business is launched. The business plan is essential for small businesses and startups, as it often forms the basis for convincing banks or investors to provide funding (McKeever 2012, p. 3).

The business plan for the Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre outlines how the services will be delivered, who the target market is, what resources are needed, and how the business will become financially sustainable (McKeever 2012, p. 3).

3.1 Principles of a Business Plan

A business plan is a tool for launching a business and a fundamental document that guides its future development. Its core principles are based on clarity, realism, and strategic alignment. The business plan should clearly define the business idea, justify its feasibility, and outline how the company intends to achieve its objectives. It must be realistic regarding financial planning, market assumptions, and operational capabilities, and flexible enough to adapt to changes in the business environment (Evans 2016, p. 19).

An effective business plan is built on thorough research and honest self-assessment. It should reflect the entrepreneur's understanding of the market, target customers, competitive landscape, and internal resources. At the same time, it must provide a coherent strategy that links the company's mission, vision, and goals with measurable steps. These principles ensure the plan is convincing to potential investors or lenders and functional as a management tool. The plan must be logical, complete, and credible. It should present a balanced combination of ambition and practicality while offering a clear value proposition and identifying the key risks and mitigation strategies (Evans 2016, p. 19).

3.2 Goals and Benefits of a Business Plan

The main goal of a business plan is to provide a clear and structured outline of how a business will function, grow, and become sustainable. It serves as a strategic guide for the entrepreneur and a communication tool for external parties such as investors, banks, or potential partners. Its structure ensures the entrepreneur can navigate the startup phase clearly and make informed decisions based on realistic assumptions (Abrams 2019,22).

Beyond its internal purpose, a business plan is crucial in gaining financial support. Banks and investors use it to evaluate the credibility and viability of the business concept. A professionally written plan shows that the entrepreneur has considered all essential aspects of the business and is prepared for potential risks. It can also monitor performance and track whether key goals are met over time (Abrams 2019,22).

Moreover, a business plan can boost the entrepreneur's confidence by translating a vision into a practical step-by-step process. It encourages strategic thinking, reveals weaknesses in the idea early on, and ensures that resources are allocated effectively. According to Abrams (2019, 22), a business plan is a starting point for launching a company and a tool for managing and refining it as it grows (Abrams 2019, p. 22).

3.3 Chapters of a Business Plan

A business plan is typically structured into several key chapters, each focusing on a different aspect of the enterprise. These chapters provide a comprehensive overview of the business idea, market environment, operational strategy, financial outlook, and potential risks. This structure ensures that all critical areas of planning and decision-making are covered and allows the plan to be easily reviewed by investors, banks, or stakeholders (Evans 2016, p. 32).

The content and depth of each chapter may vary depending on the type and size of the business, but the fundamental sections usually remain consistent. These include the title page, executive summary, company description, product or service offering, market analysis, competitive analysis, marketing and sales strategy, organisational structure, financial plan, and risk evaluation. An appendix is typically added at the end to support the plan with charts, data, certificates, or references (Evans 2016, p. 32).

By organising the plan into these chapters, entrepreneurs can ensure that their business strategy is communicated and easy to follow. Each section plays an essential role

in shaping the reader's understanding of the business, its potential, and how it will achieve its objectives (Evans 2016, p. 32).

3.3.1 Title Page

The title page is the first element of the business plan and should immediately communicate key information about the business. It typically includes the company name, logo, address, contact information, date of creation, and the name of the founder or management. A professional and visually clear title page makes a strong first impression and sets the tone for the rest of the document (Scarborough 2016, p. 156).

In addition to identifying the business, the title page can indicate whether the plan is confidential, include a version number, or specify whether it is an internal or external version. The layout should be simple, clean, and formal. Even the most carefully prepared plan can lose credibility if it lacks professional formatting from the outset (Scarborough 2016, p. 156).

3.3.2 Executive Summary

The executive summary, placed at the forefront of the plan, holds significant importance in capturing the essence of the business. It provides a concise overview of the business concept and should capture the reader's interest within the first few paragraphs. Its goal is to summarise the most essential information from the rest of the plan — including the business idea, target market, competitive advantage, financial projections, and funding needs — clearly and engagingly (Barringer and Ireland 2016, 96).

While the executive summary is placed at the beginning, it is usually written last, after the rest of the business plan is complete. This ensures that it accurately reflects the full content and strategy of the business. It is typically no more than one or two pages long and should be written in a confident, professional tone that invites the reader to explore the rest of the plan (Barringer and Ireland 2016, 96).

3.3.3 Company Description

The company description provides a clear and detailed picture of the business, explaining what it does, what makes it unique, and what goals it aims to achieve. This section includes the company's legal structure, ownership, mission, vision, location, and the problem it solves

in the market. It should give the reader a clear understanding of the business's foundation and future direction (Burns 2016, p. 44).

In addition, this part of the plan can highlight the business's core values, describe its current status, and explain how the company fits into the broader market. In the case of service-based businesses, such as the Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre, the description might also emphasise the social or community value of the service provided. A strong company description builds trust and provides context for the more technical parts of the plan that follow (Burns 2016, p. 44).

3.3.4 Service Description

This section of the business plan describes the company's services in detail. It explains what is being provided, how it works, what makes it valuable, and why customers would choose it over other options in the market. The service description should clearly outline the unique selling points and emphasise how the service solves a problem or fulfils a specific need for the target audience (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2014, p. 8).

The Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre's services include individual and group therapy sessions involving trained therapy animals, educational workshops about animal-assisted interventions, and animal physiotherapy. Each service is tailored to different client needs, whether for physical rehabilitation, emotional support, or educational development. The emphasis on personalisation, professional staff, and holistic care adds significant value and sets the centre apart from traditional health or wellness services.

A well-defined service description helps investors and partners understand the business's offerings and why it is positioned to succeed in its chosen market (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2014, p. 8).

3.3.5 Target Market Analysis

Target market analysis is a key component of the business plan, as it identifies and defines the group of customers the company intends to serve. It outlines demographic characteristics, psychographic traits, geographic location, and behavioural patterns. Understanding the target market helps entrepreneurs tailor their services, pricing, communication, and overall strategy to meet real customer needs (Blythe 2018, p. 57).

The Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre's primary market includes individuals seeking support for mental or physical health challenges through non-traditional therapy methods.

This may involve clients dealing with anxiety, stress, or trauma, as well as children with developmental disorders or seniors needing emotional support. Secondary markets include healthcare institutions, schools, and professionals interested in animal-assisted education or therapy (Blythe 2018, p. 57).

Accurate market segmentation allows the business to focus its resources efficiently and speak directly to its ideal clients, increasing the chances of long-term customer loyalty and satisfaction (Blythe 2018, p. 57).

3.3.6 Competition Analysis

Competition analysis helps entrepreneurs understand the market landscape and identify existing and potential competitors' strengths, weaknesses, and strategies. This section highlights the main competitors, their services, their position, and their pricing, marketing, and customer service approaches. By analysing competitors, the business can uncover market gaps and opportunities for differentiation (Kotler and Keller 2016, p. 205).

For the Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre, direct competitors may include traditional psychological clinics, wellness centres, or individual therapists offering similar services. Indirect competitors could be alternative therapies such as art therapy or physiotherapy without animal involvement (Kotler & Keller 2016, p. 205).

A strong understanding of the competitive environment allows the business to define its market position and develop strategies emphasising its unique value proposition (Kotler & Keller 2016, p. 205).

3.3.7 Marketing Plan

The marketing plan outlines how the business will promote its services, attract clients, and build long-term customer relationships. It includes the key elements of the marketing mix—product, price, place, and promotion (often recognised as the 4Ps)—and defines the strategy for effectively reaching the target market. This chapter is critical for ensuring the services are well-designed, visible, and accessible to potential customers (Baines, Fill, and Page 2019, 122).

The Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre's marketing strategy focuses on emotional connection, credibility, and education. Promotion will occur through social media platforms, partnerships with local healthcare providers and schools, informational workshops, and targeted online advertising. Word-of-mouth and testimonials will also play an essential role

in building trust. Pricing will reflect the specialised nature of the service, while the distribution (place) strategy is based on accessibility and the calm environment of the centre (Baines, Fill, and Page 2019, 122).

A well-structured marketing plan ensures that resources are used efficiently and that messaging aligns with the values and needs of the intended audience (Baines, Fill, and Page 2019, 122).

3.3.8 Organisational Structure

Organisational structure determines how roles and authority are organised and coordinated within the company. It outlines the company's internal framework, including key positions, reporting relationships, and coordination between departments or individuals. A clear structure improves the organisation's efficiency, communication, and accountability (Daft 2016, p. 134).

Due to its size, the structure of the Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre is relatively simple. The owner is the managing director and therapist, responsible for day-to-day operations, client care, and business management. A full-time animal handler supports the therapy sessions and oversees animal welfare. Additional roles, such as administrative support or marketing assistants, may be added as the centre grows. The structure is intentionally flexible to accommodate future expansion while maintaining high-quality, personalised service (Daft 2016, p. 134).

A well-defined organisational structure contributes to smoother operations and supports the business in delivering consistent, high-value services (Daft 2016, p. 134).

3.3.9 Financial Plan

The financial plan is a critical section that supports the business plan's overall credibility and viability. It provides a realistic picture of the business's expected financial performance, including projected revenues, costs, profit or loss, and investment needs. It typically includes a startup balance sheet, start-up costs, monthly operating expenses, labour costs, estimated revenues, and income statements under various scenarios (pessimistic, realistic, optimistic) (McKeever 2012, p. 4).

The Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre's financial plan demonstrates that the business can generate enough income to cover its expenses and become profitable over time. It also highlights the importance of planning for unexpected costs and maintaining financial

reserves. The financial projections are based on current market conditions in the Czech Republic and are intended to demonstrate both feasibility and sustainability (McKeever 2012, p. 4).

3.3.10 Risk Analysis

No business is without risks, and this chapter identifies the key threats that could affect operations. These may include internal risks such as staffing issues or reliance on key personnel, as well as external risks like economic downturns, changes in legislation, or shifts in customer behaviour. This section acknowledges potential problems and presents strategies for minimising or managing them (Sadgrove 2016, p. 67).

In the Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre context, potential risks include a lack of customer interest, challenges in finding qualified staff, the health of therapy animals, and broader political or economic instability. Mitigating strategies include maintaining financial reserves, investing in staff training, maintaining insurance coverage, and staying updated on legal regulations. Effective risk management enhances the business's resilience and adaptability (Sadgrove 2016, p. 67).

3.3.11 Appendix

The appendix is the final part of the business plan and includes supporting materials that provide further details without interrupting the main narrative. This might include graphs, financial tables, legal documents, product visuals, certifications, market research data, or references. The purpose of the appendix is to strengthen the plan's credibility by offering evidence that backs up the claims made in the earlier chapters (Abrams 2019, p. 231).

In the Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre's case, the appendix could include price lists, floor plans of the therapy space, mock marketing visuals, licensing documentation, and detailed financial projections. It allows stakeholders to explore specific areas of interest in more depth (Abrams 2019, p. 231).

II PRACTICAL PART

4 A BUSINESS PLAN FOR AN ANIMAL-ASSISTED THERAPY CENTRE

4.1 Title Page

Picture 1 Logo of the company



(source: Bc. Iva Zelníčková)

A Business Plan for an Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre

Name of the company:	Imprinted Paws
Legal form:	Natural person
Residence of the company:	Mladcová, Zlín 760 01 Czech Republic
Date of establishment:	1.9.2025
Founded by:	Karolína Miklíková
Telephone number:	+775 983 066
E-mail address:	mikl.kaja@seznam.cz
Company's description:	One of the first animal-assisted therapy centres in Zlín, which offers therapeutic appointments with professional handlers with a healthcare education and trained animals.

4.2 Executive Summary

The aim is to establish a centre that would use animals' healing effects to help people with their physical or mental issues. This business would be the first in Zlín, so the project has strong potential and promising success.

Karolína Miklíková, an enthusiastic animal lover with a healthcare education, founded Imprinted Paws. The business is conducted as a natural person under the trade license.

Professional, medically knowledgeable handlers will provide services. Their responsibilities will include caring for therapy animals and understanding and responding to clients' needs. Every client will be guaranteed an individualistic and holistic approach. The business owner will pick out handlers. At the start, there will be only two handlers, one of whom will be the owner.

Imprinted Paws will mostly pick its animals from carefully picked breeding stations. The owner decided on the dog breeds based on her previous experiences. The breeds she chose for dogs are the Labrador Retriever, the Poodle, and the Border Collie. The breed of cat is a Siamese cat. The owner would also like to adopt some animals from the animal shelter in the future. The centre will start with five working animals—three dogs and two cats.

The place and location are very convenient. It is a family house with two separate living spaces, one of which will have the centre's spaces. Since it is in the family house, the owner does not have to pay rent. The location is close to the city centre but still out of reach of the chaotic city life. People can easily access the centre by car (5 minutes' drive), by bus from the city centre (10 minutes' drive) or on foot (20 minutes). Parking spots will be provided for the clients.

The operating and establishment costs are around 415,000 CZK. The owner will cover these costs from her savings and a family loan.

4.3 Company Description

There is no dedicated animal-assisted therapy centre in Zlín or the surrounding areas. The place offers therapy not only for dogs and cats. In Zlín, we can find people who will provide this service to hospitals or other healthcare facilities; however, they do not offer any neutral place like a clinic which clients could visit. That is why our centre is different. This centre offers spaces where clients can get their animal therapy, also with medical professionals like nurses. The staff get to know every client and prepare exercises, quests and fun activities that suit them best.

Mission statement

The animal-assisted therapy centre aims to help individuals with physical or mental health issues. It also provides services for those who are just seeking relaxation with animals. The company wants to show the public that other new ways can help them.

Vision

The vision of the Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre is to become a trusted and respected place of support, healing, and personal growth through the power of human-animal connection. The centre aspires to be recognised as an innovative, holistic care provider in the Zlín region, offering a safe and welcoming environment where trained animals and qualified healthcare professionals guide therapy. In the long term, the centre aims to expand its services, collaborate with institutions, and increase public awareness about the benefits of animal-assisted therapy, ultimately making this form of care more accessible and widely accepted across the Czech Republic.

Ownership

The owner will be Karolína Miklíková, an animal lover and educated nurse. She will be fully responsible for all business operations, such as recruiting new employees, creating efficient marketing strategies, talking to sponsors, communicating with clients and their families to ensure the best care, and, lastly, making sure that all the animals are receiving great care.

Legal form

The owner will run the business individually, in compliance with the Trade Licensing Act No. 455/1991 Coll. While the owner satisfies the general criteria for operating a craft trade, additional professional qualifications are required. To meet these requirements, a qualified and experienced individual will be designated as the representative responsible. This

representative will possess the appropriate certifications and a background in zootherapy and will work full-time as the lead zootherapist at the centre.

Location

The Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre will be located in the owner's family home in the Mladcová district of Zlín. It is easily approachable by public transportation or by car. The owner will also provide parking spaces. Mladcová is situated at the edge of the town, which provides a much calmer environment where clients can relax and take a break from the everyday rush of the city. The house consists of two parts. The bigger one is where the owner's family lives. The second part meets all the parameters needed to work legally as a clinic. It has its separate entrance. Therefore, there will not be any privacy issues.

Opening hours

The centre will not have set opening hours. It will depend on the clients and when they make their appointments. However, there will be a few set hours a week during which the owner will offer a possibility for everyone interested in coming and meeting all the animals or the environment of the centre in general. This could help clients decide if they want to try the offered services.

4.4 Service Description

The primary service will be animal-assisted therapy sessions. The centre will offer one-on-one or group therapy sessions facilitated by therapists and certified therapy animals. These sessions are designed to address a variety of mental or physical concerns. Clients can choose from the animals which animal they feel most comfortable with, or the handler can assist in selecting the most appropriate therapy animal. Therapeutic activities differ from grooming or interactive play with the animals to positioning the clients with the animal to use the natural warmth of animal bodies to help with human tissues.

Another service provided will be training and education on the benefits of animal-assisted therapy and proper care of therapy animals. These sessions will benefit therapists, handlers, and health professionals. Another service will be provided is an individual physiotherapy session for dogs and cats.

4.5 Market Analysis

The market analysis examines and focuses on the company's external environment. Every company needs to analyse its surroundings and consider potential threats or competition.

4.5.1 PEST Analysis

PEST stands for political-legal, economic, socio-cultural, and technological factors. It is found in strategic management, especially when an organisation decides on a long-range strategy when introducing a new product or service.

Political-legal factors

Changes in government policies regarding healthcare, mental health funding, and animal welfare regulations can significantly impact an animal-assisted therapy (AAT) centre's operations. Potential political instability or shifts in priorities (e.g., reduced healthcare budgets or stricter regulations on animal use in therapy) could pose economic and operational challenges. Furthermore, legal requirements concerning facility licensing, patient confidentiality, therapist qualifications, and animal safety standards must be closely monitored and adhered to.

Economic factors

The financial well-being of potential clients directly affects the demand for AAT services. Economic downturns, high inflation, and increased living costs may result in fewer people being able to afford therapeutic services, especially those not covered by public health insurance. Rising prices of essentials such as energy and transportation also impact the centre's operational costs, possibly affecting service pricing and accessibility.

Socio-cultural factors

Society increasingly recognises the value of holistic and alternative therapies, which positions AAT as a progressive and appealing option. However, the concept is still relatively new to many, and there may be scepticism or a lack of awareness. Additionally, in a culture where pharmacological solutions dominate mental health treatment, introducing non-medication-based approaches like AAT may require significant educational outreach and evidence-based advocacy. Cultural attitudes toward animals and mental health also influence acceptance and uptake of AAT services (Stokes & Wilson 2017, p. 213).

Technological factors

Technology presents both opportunities and challenges. The rise of online platforms enables virtual workshops, therapy education, and outreach programs, making services more accessible to rural or remote populations. IT systems are essential for managing client data securely and efficiently. Emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) can also support administrative tasks, personalised treatment plans, and behavioural tracking for therapy animals. However, the initial cost of implementing such technologies and staff training can be a barrier for small or newly established centres.

4.6 Competition Analysis

4.6.1 Porter's Five Forces Analysis

Porter's five force analysis identifies the risks arising from a particular sector's business and the company's position in the market.

Competitive Rivalry

Every company wants to succeed in a competitive environment and strives to offer its clients and customers a better, higher-quality service or product. They all have to respond to the demand and competition in the industry and change their strategy. Price competition is also used here. Therefore, it is necessary to take a look at the market and offer other aspects that are attractive to people. The primary focus here is not on the price of the service or product, but on providing a different approach, an overall image and an individual approach.

The competitive forces determine the degree of competition. Competition in the health sector is also conditioned and influenced by the state, which intervenes and regulates the market as part of its health policy.

The advantage of this business is that in Zlín, there is no animal-assisted therapy centre. Few volunteers visit hospitals with their therapy dogs, but none offer a space or therapy suited to the individual.

Bargaining Power of Suppliers

The most needed supplies will be animal food, energy for the centre, and health care equipment. The food will be supplied by Brit, with the possibility of collaboration. For energy, there are plenty of companies to choose from. The deciding factor will be the price. Lastly, healthcare equipment will be supplied by online e-shops. At the start, only basic

equipment will be offered, and more equipment will be provided after understanding the client's needs better.

Bargaining Power of Buyers

When offering a therapy service, the patient becomes a customer entering the system. We need to recognise that a satisfied client or customer who has satisfied their needs will continue to return and use our services when required. Overall satisfaction is not only based on the qualifications of the employees but also on the comprehensiveness of the treatment and the positive attitude of all staff and well-behaved animals. The demand for non-medical treatment is increasing. People try to find alternative ways to help them with their physical or mental issues.

Threat of New Entrants

There is always a possibility of a new competitor starting a similar business. However, animal-assisted therapy is still very new, and very few businesses offer this form of treatment. No company provides animal-assisted therapy regularly in its own spaces or with trained professionals in animal handling and healthcare.

Threat of Substitute Products or Services

In the case of offering therapy, we are talking about a substitute service rather than a substitute product. In Zlín, other facilities provide alternative ways of treatment to clients. These may include services such as massage therapy, art therapy, or conventional physiotherapy, which can address similar needs. The main factors are price, staff erudition, quality, staff attitude, trained animals, etc. The demand is not yet too great for this particular centre, as most clients are unaware of such a possibility.

4.7 Marketing Plan

A well-designed marketing plan is crucial to any business's success. Establishing a business mission, goals, and vision with a follow-up strategy is essential. Information collected from market analysis will be used to create a plan that will fulfil the customer's needs.

4.7.1 SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Originality
- Professionalism and trained staff
- Location
- Holistic approach

Weaknesses

- No experience with running a business.
- Irreplaceable employees

Opportunities

- Increasing demand for alternative treatment
- New approaches
- Increase in mental illnesses among the population

Threats

- Young company, new on the market
- Lack of customers' interest

	Opportunities		Threats		
	Increasing demand for alternative treatment	New approaches	Young company, new on the market	Lack of customers ' interest	Unstable economic
Strengths					
Originality	+		+		
Professionalism and trained staff		+		+	+
Location	+				
Holistic approach	+		+		+
Weaknesses					
No experience with running a business		-	-		-
Irreplaceable employees	-			-	-
Total of "+"	9				
Total of „-“	6				
Difference	3				

(source: own creation)

One of the strengths is certainly the originality of the business and that it will be the first of its kind in Zlín. The services provided are carried out by highly qualified professionals who give individual attention to each client and their health problem. The treatments provided are certainly another positive and strong aspect. Employees will be able to look at the clients holistically and will treat them with understanding that every issue has more to it than what we can see or measure. Another advantage is the location, which offers a calm space that can be easily accessed.

One of the weaknesses is that the owner has no business experience. However, this factor can be improved in the future, primarily if the owner administers things responsibly and contacts some representatives who are open to sharing their experience. A second

weakness is the irreplaceable employees. The clinic wants to offer the best service provided by qualified professionals. The qualification is specific in the field, so finding someone new could take some time.

Opportunities include the increasing public demand for alternative treatments, which ensures sufficient demand for the services offered. Also, regular staff training and introducing new treatments and methods into clinics' routine practice consolidate their position in a competitive environment (Blythe 2018, p. 92).

The constantly changing legislation threatens the smooth operation of a clinic or business today. Also, the increasing costs of the services provided may lead to economic instability of the organisation, especially as a new company on the market. Since such businesses are still developing in the Czech Republic, the public has little knowledge about them, which could lead to a lack of interest. General threats that we cannot influence in time include political and economic instability and emergencies.

4.7.2 Target Market

The advantage of Imprinted Paws is that no specific group of customers can use the services. The services offered will suit everyone, regardless of age, gender, etc. The owner will advertise the business in many ways (described later in the text) to reach diverse social groups.

4.7.3 Marketing Mix

Product

The Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre will provide various services to support individuals and animals. These services will include animal-assisted therapy sessions in one-on-one and group formats to promote emotional and psychological well-being. The centre will also offer training and education on the benefits of animal-assisted therapy and guidance on the proper care of therapy animals to ensure their well-being and effectiveness. Additionally, the centre will provide individual physiotherapy sessions for dogs and cats, focusing on improving their mobility, strength, and overall health.

Price

Animal-assisted therapy sessions will be available starting from 500 CZK for group sessions and 1,000 CZK for individual 40-minute sessions, providing personalised therapeutic experiences to improve mental health, emotional resilience, and overall well-being. In addition to therapy, the centre will host educational seminars priced at 3,500 CZK per session, designed for therapists, handlers, and healthcare professionals interested in the principles and benefits of animal-assisted therapy. For schools or institutions, specialised interactive workshops with practical demonstrations will be offered at a rate of 5,000 CZK, creating a unique and engaging learning experience. To support the physical health of animals, the centre will also provide physiotherapy sessions for dogs and cats at 700 CZK per session, focusing on rehabilitation, mobility, and wellness. All services are carefully crafted to enhance the relationship between humans and animals while promoting a holistic approach to health for both.

Place

The services of the Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre will be offered at various locations to ensure accessibility and convenience for clients. Therapy sessions will occur at the Mladcová clinic, where individuals can benefit from structured, professional support. Additionally, the centre will provide school services, helping integrate animal-assisted therapy into educational settings to support students' emotional and social development. For added flexibility, therapy will also be available at clients' homes when needed, offering personalised care in a familiar environment. Moreover, the centre will arrange sessions at different locations after prior consultation, ensuring that the therapeutic setting is tailored to the needs of each individual or group. This approach allows us to offer a range of accessible options, bringing the benefits of animal-assisted therapy directly to those who need it most.

Promotion

The services of the Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre will be promoted through various channels to reach a broad audience. Leaflets will be distributed in local communities, clinics, and partner locations, providing detailed information about the therapy services. In addition, the centre will leverage social media platforms to share success stories, client testimonials, and updates, engaging a broader online audience. The centre's website will serve as a central hub for booking appointments, learning about the benefits of animal-assisted therapy, and accessing resources. Lastly, word of mouth will be key in spreading awareness, with satisfied

clients and partners sharing their positive experiences and referring others to the centre. These combined efforts will ensure the services are well-publicised and accessible to those in need.

4.8 Organisational Structure

The Imprinted Paws will use a basic organisational structure. The owner will have one employee who specialises in animal handling and has a background in the medical field. The owner will be responsible for the employees and their salaries, the animals' well-being, accounting, and communication with clients and suppliers. From the start, the owner will be the primary handler and medical employee and work on Saturdays so the other handler/therapist can stay home.

When the owner is absent, the hired employee will be the responsible representative and handler. Based on the client's appointment or other scheduled programs, the handler will work from Monday to Friday. The handler will take care of and train the animals in the morning. Afterwards, they will also prepare the clinic for the client's arrival. The gross wage of the handler will be 32,000 CZK per month. The owner will also provide benefits for the employee. After a specific time, the owner will hire an assistant who will help manage the appointments and care for animals and another handler.

4.9 Financial Plan

The financial plan outlines the key economic aspects related to the establishment and initial operation of the Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre. The financial analysis is based on realistic estimates that reflect current market conditions in the Czech Republic. The goal is to demonstrate the centre's economic feasibility and long-term sustainability while maintaining a responsible and well-structured budgeting and resource management approach.

4.9.1 Start-up balance sheet (simplified)

The simplified start-up balance sheet provides an overview of the initial financial structure of the Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre. It includes the registered capital the owner contributed, the bank account's opening balances and cash on hand. This balance sheet reflects a stable starting position, with sufficient funds allocated to cover early operational costs, investments in equipment, and the initial phase of service delivery.

Table 1 Start-up balance sheet.

Assets (in CZK)		Liabilities (in CZK)	
Long-term assets	0	Equity	600,000
		Registered Capital	600,000
Current assets	600,000	Current liabilities	0
Bank Account	575,000		
Cash	25,000		
Total	600,000	Total	600,000

(source: own creation)

4.9.2 Start-up costs

The start-up costs for the Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre in Zlín represent the initial financial requirements necessary to launch and operate the business. These expenses include legal registration, facility renovation, marketing, acquisition of therapy equipment, animal care supplies, and essential technology. A significant portion of the investment also covers the adaptation of space for animal-friendly therapy and the purchase or adoption of therapy animals. These calculated costs provide a realistic foundation for launching a professional and client-centred therapy centre.

Table 2 Start-up costs

Item	Price (in CZK)
Initial Investment	
Business registration & legal services	5,000
Marketing & Promotion	20,000
Facility renovation and setup	60,000
Equipment and Therapy Tools	
Animal housing and fencing	35,000
Basic therapy/office equipment	15,000
Office furniture and supplies	20,000

Animal transport carrier & vehicle adaptation	40,000
Veterinary equipment and first aid	10,000
Technology	
Computer, printer, and office setup	25,000
Booking & therapy management software	10,000
Wi-Fi setup	2,000
Animals and Initial Care	
Purchase/adoption of therapy animals	50,000
Initial veterinary checks and vaccinations	8,000
Initial food and supplies for animals	5,000
Other	
Insurance (property, liability)	12,000
Initial staff training & certification	18,000
Financial reserve	50,000
Total Estimated Start-up Costs	415,000

(source: own creation)

4.9.3 Labour cost

The Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre will employ one full-time handler in addition to the owner, who will also work full-time. Employers' social and health insurance contributions in the Czech Republic are 33.8% of the gross wage. This is considered in the total labour costs below.

Table 3 Labor cost

Employee	Gross wage per month (CZK)	Social and health insurance (33.8%)	Wage + insurance per month	Annually
Full-time Handler	32,000	10,816	42,816	513,792
TOTAL	32,000	10,816	42,816	513,792

(source: own creation)

4.9.4 Operating costs

The operating costs of the Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre include all regular monthly and annual expenses necessary for maintaining day-to-day operations. Rental fees are not included since the business will be run from the owner's home. Fixed costs cover essential items such as internet and mobile services, business insurance, energy consumption, employee wages, employer health and social insurance contributions, veterinary care, animal food, cleaning supplies, and office materials. These costs are based on realistic estimates reflecting current market prices in the Czech Republic and ensure that the centre can operate effectively and sustainably from the outset.

Table 4 Operating costs

Operating costs (in CZK)		
	Monthly	Annually
Fixed costs		
Internet	800	9,600
Mobile	600	7,200
Insurance for business	1,000	12,000
Energy consumption	6,000	72,000
Employee wage, including insurance	42,816	513,792
Food for animals	4,000	48,000
Veterinary care	3,000	36,000

Cleaning and hygiene supplies	1,500	18,000
Office supplies	2,000	24,000

(source: own creation)

4.9.5 Estimated revenues

The estimated revenues for the Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre are based on three scenarios: pessimistic, realistic, and optimistic. These projections consider the primary services provided, including individual and group therapy sessions, educational workshops, and animal physiotherapy. Prices were set realistically to reflect the quality and specialisation of services offered, while remaining accessible. In the realistic scenario, monthly revenue is projected at approximately CZK 93,500, comfortably exceeding the estimated monthly operating costs of CZK 59,500. This margin allows for sustainable growth, future investment, and financial stability. By offering a diverse range of services and targeting different client groups—such as individuals, institutions, and professionals—the centre aims to build a steady income stream while fulfilling its therapeutic mission. Estimates are based on market research and real price offers from comparable service providers.

Pessimistic scenario

Table 5 Estimated revenues- pessimistic scenario

Service	Estimated monthly usage	Average price (CZK)	Estimated monthly revenue (CZK)
Individual therapy sessions	40	1,000	40,000
Group therapy sessions	8	500	4,000
Workshops/training	1	3,500	3,500
Workshops with practical demonstrations	1	5,000	5,000
Animal physiotherapy (dogs/cats)	10	700	7,000
		Total	59,500 CZK

(source: own creation)

Realistic scenario

Table 6 Estimated revenues- realistic scenario

Service	Estimated monthly usage	Average price (CZK)	Estimated monthly revenue (CZK)
Individual therapy sessions	60	1,000	60,000
Group therapy sessions	12	500	6,000
Workshops/training	2	3,500	7,000
Workshops with practical demonstrations	2	5,000	10,000
Animal physiotherapy (dogs/cats)	15	700	10,500
		Total	93,500 CZK

*(source: own creation)***Optimistic scenario**

Table 7 Estimated revenues – optimistic scenario

Service	Estimated monthly usage	Average price (CZK)	Estimated monthly revenue (CZK)
Individual therapy sessions	80	1,000	80,000
Group therapy sessions	20	500	10,000
Workshops/training	3	3,500	10,500
Workshops with practical demonstrations	3	5,000	15,000
Animal physiotherapy (dogs/cats)	20	700	14,000
		Total	129,500 CZK

*(source: own creation)***4.9.6 Income Statement**

The income statements presented are based on projected revenues and estimated operating expenses, which vary across three scenarios: pessimistic, realistic, and optimistic. Each statement calculates financial performance by subtracting total costs from income, resulting in Earnings Before Tax (EBT). If the EBT is positive, a 15% income tax is applied to determine the final Earnings After Tax (EAT).

During the first month of operation, the total expenditure includes initial start-up investments and the recurring monthly operational costs. From the second month forward, only the monthly operational expenses are considered. For the annual summary, the total cost reflects the combination of start-up costs and ongoing fees for an entire year, providing a complete picture of financial viability in each scenario.

Pessimistic scenario

Table 8 Income statement – pessimistic scenario

	1st Month	2nd Month	Yearly
Revenues	59,500 CZK	59,500 CZK	714,000 CZK
Costs	476,816 CZK	61,816 CZK	1,156,792 CZK
EBT	-417,316 CZK	-2,316 CZK	-442,792 CZK
EAT	-417,316 CZK	-2,316 CZK	-442,792 CZK

(source: own creation)

In the pessimistic scenario, the centre operates at a loss during the first year due to limited client interest and minimal revenue. The start-up investment combined with modest income levels results in a negative EAT, indicating that the business would not be financially self-sufficient. However, this projection highlights the importance of strong marketing and client engagement in the early stages to avoid this outcome.

Realistic scenario

Table 9 Income statement – realistic scenario

	1st Month	2nd Month	Yearly
Revenues	93,500 CZK	93,500 CZK	1,122,000 CZK
Costs	476,816 CZK	61,816 CZK	1,156,792 CZK
EBT	-383,316 CZK	+31,684 CZK	-34,792 CZK
EAT	-383,316 CZK	+26,931 CZK	-34,792 CZK

(source: own creation)

The realistic scenario reflects steady demand for the centre's services and assumes a balanced flow of clients. While the business ends the first month in deficit due to initial investments, it becomes profitable from the second month onward. The projected annual earnings after tax show that the centre is financially viable and capable of sustaining itself, with room for gradual growth and reinvestment.

Optimistic scenario

Table 10 Income statement- optimistic scenario

	1st Month	2nd Month	Yearly
Revenues	129,500 CZK	129,500 CZK	1,554,000 CZK
Costs	476,816 CZK	61,816 CZK	1,156,792 CZK
EBT	-347,316 CZK	+67,684 CZK	+397,208 CZK
EAT	-347,316 CZK	+57,531 CZK	+337,626 CZK

(source: own creation)

In the optimistic scenario, the centre reaches high client volumes and consistently fills its available capacity. Revenues significantly exceed costs, even during the first year when start-up expenses are considered. The high EAT demonstrates strong profitability and suggests excellent market reception, effective outreach, and operational efficiency. This scenario shows the full potential of the business under ideal conditions.

4.9.7 Return on Investment

Return on Investment (ROI) is a financial metric representing the benefit gained from an investment, expressed as a percentage. It allows for evaluating how effectively and profitably an investment is performing. A positive ROI indicates that the investment has generated more income than its cost, whereas a negative ROI reflects a financial loss. ROI is calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{ROI} = (\text{Net Income} / \text{Initial Investment}) \times 100$$

$$\text{ROI for pessimistic scenario} = (-442,792 / 600,000) \times 100 = -73.80\%$$

$$\text{ROI for realistic scenario} = (-34,792 / 600,000) \times 100 = -5.80\%$$

$$\text{ROI for optimistic scenario} = (337,626 / 600,000) \times 100 = 56.27\%$$

The ROI differs notably across the three financial scenarios. In the pessimistic case, the ROI is approximately -73.80% , reflecting a significant loss and indicating that the centre would be far from recovering its initial investment within the first year. In the realistic scenario, ROI is around -5.80% , suggesting that although the business progresses toward breaking even, it would not yet generate a full return on investment in the first year. The optimistic scenario presents a positive ROI of 56.27% , meaning the business would recover the initial costs and produce a considerable profit. These figures illustrate that while the centre may face initial challenges, it has strong potential for profitability in favourable market conditions.

4.10 Risk Evaluation

Entrepreneurs should know the potential risks and recognise possible threats from starting and running a business. It is essential to identify these risks in advance and take the necessary steps to minimise them. The following are the main risks related to the Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre:

- **Complete shutdown of the business**

There is a risk that the business might be forced to shut down entirely due to financial difficulties or other unforeseen events. To reduce this likelihood, the owner has included a financial reserve in the start-up costs, which should help cover basic operational expenses during challenging periods.

- **Unreliable employees**

Since the centre will employ one full-time handler, there is a risk that the quality of service could be negatively affected if the employee is unprofessional, unmotivated, or leaves the position unexpectedly. Therefore, the employee will be selected carefully based on experience, reliability, and personal attitude towards animals and clients.

- **Sick therapy animals**

The therapy animals are crucial to the business. If a dog or a cat becomes sick or injured, it could interrupt the service offering. All animals will receive regular veterinary care and proper rest to prevent this. The centre will also plan to have at least one additional therapy animal as a backup.

- **Lack of customer interest**

Due to the low awareness of animal-assisted therapy in the Czech Republic, there is a risk that the public may not show enough interest in the services. To avoid this, the centre will focus on local marketing campaigns, cooperation with healthcare professionals, and client education to explain the benefits of this therapy method.

- **Legal and economic factors**

The owner must be prepared for possible changes in legal regulations, especially in areas such as animal welfare, health services, or data protection (e.g., GDPR). Additionally, rising energy prices or inflation could increase operational costs. The owner plans to regularly monitor new legal developments and maintain financial flexibility to respond to changes.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has presented a comprehensive business plan for establishing an Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre in Zlín, Czech Republic. The centre is designed to provide a unique combination of healthcare and therapeutic animal interaction through individual and group therapy sessions, educational workshops, and animal physiotherapy services. With growing interest in holistic approaches to physical and mental well-being, the proposed centre meets an emerging demand in the region.

The theoretical part outlined key concepts related to entrepreneurship, business formation, and business plan development. At the same time, the practical section applied these concepts to create a detailed and realistic blueprint for launching the therapy centre. This included market and competition analysis, financial planning, marketing strategy, and risk evaluation.

Financial calculations across three revenue scenarios—pessimistic, realistic, and optimistic—highlight the centre's potential for sustainability and long-term viability. In the realistic scenario, the projected annual revenue of CZK 1,122,000 is nearly sufficient to cover operational and start-up costs, resulting in a minimal net loss and an ROI of -5.80%. This outcome reflects near break-even performance, indicating that the centre could soon become profitable with consistent demand. The optimistic scenario reveals the full earning potential of the business, with a projected ROI of 56.27%, suggesting strong client interest and capacity for growth. Although the pessimistic scenario results in a significant loss and a negative ROI of -73.80%, it underscores the importance of active client acquisition and strategic promotion during the centre's initial phase.

In conclusion, the Animal-Assisted Therapy Centre represents a financially responsible and socially meaningful venture. With professional execution, focused outreach, and strong community engagement, the centre can meet real healthcare needs while achieving economic sustainability.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAT	Animal-Assisted Therapy
CZK	Czech Koruna
EAT	Earnings After Tax
EBT	Earnings Before Tax
EEIG	European Economic Interest Grouping
EU	European Union
ROI	Return on Investment
SCE	European Cooperative Society
SE	Societas Europaea
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
PEST	Political-legal, Economic, Socio-cultural, and Technological factors
e.g.	Exempli gratia

APPENDICES


Aura Canis, z. s.
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vydává

osvědčení o absolvování canisterapeutické zkoušky

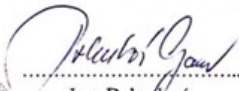
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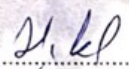
a psův
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Osvědčení o absolvování Felinoterapeutické zkoušky

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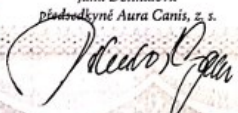
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plemeno: Thajská kočka
s majitelem paní/pan: Ing. Vlasta Miklíková

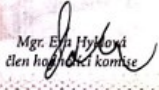
úspěšně absolvovala felinoterapeutickou zkoušku

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