

775-Strategic Planning - It's Hard to Execute Strategy in Everyday Business Life - What To Do About That

So you have put together a detailed strategic plan for your business. You know what you want to accomplish. You've got clear objectives. You're all "fired up" and ready to execute. Then, you're hit with the day-to-day operations of your business, the problems and issues. How do you keep your business strategic plan from being "wiped out" by your everyday business? This is one of the most problematic areas of running a business strategically. What is the answer? Here are a few ideas for you to consider.

1) Use your strategic objectives as the "filter" for all your business decisions.

Ask yourself, "Will this action / these actions advance my strategy? Does it fail to contribute to my strategy?" Look at the ways that you spend time, energy and effort. Examine their impact on, lack of impact on, or hindrance of your business strategy. With this filter mechanism in place, it becomes easier to avoid, delete, or delegate certain activities. Be fearless in doing so.

2) Do it first!

Arrange your schedule so that strategic matters take first priority. Put them into your calendar first and arrange other commitments around them. Do them first in your day, first in your week, first in the month. Make them a priority. Make sure others understand, and recognize that strategic items have priority and get their support for that.

3) Revisit and revise your strategy regularly, preferably weekly.

It should not take you more than 30 minutes to an hour to do this - often considerably less time. This keeps your business strategy top of mind and evolving as you execute it. Writing up a strategy and putting it on a shelf or in a drawer is a waste. Keep it alive by regularly revisiting and revising it.

4) Write your strategic plan.

A strategy that isn't written is nothing but a bunch of ideas "banging around" in your head. Get everything written down on paper or typed up. Don't worry about it being "perfect", complete or finished. That's a mistake. Get down what you know RIGHT NOW about your strategic plan. Note the areas where you have to learn, figure out or research, and include those in your plan. Don't let your areas of uncertainty keep you from going forward with executing your areas of certainty.

5) Write it up in a simple format.

My recommendation is a format I invented. Write the strategy at the top of a page. Draw columns down the page. Put a tactic as the heading of each column. Underneath each tactic heading, put all the action steps to accomplish that tactic.

Suzi Elton provides business writing that attracts targeted prospects to your service business and converts them into clients for you. She is a Robert Middleton Certified Action Plan Marketing Coach, as well as a professional writer. Her website offers a free series of 8 assessments you can use to analyze your own site.

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For example, if your strategy is to increase business revenue, your tactics might be, "Add more profitable services.", "Add products.", "Eliminate least profitable offerings." and "Create joint ventures". As action steps under a tactic, for example, you might have under "Add more profitable services", action steps such as "Create higher priced packages of services", "Add more value to increase price", and "Create service/product combinations". Underneath each of these action steps, break each down into smaller and smaller actions. Break them down into the smallest units.

6) Make your strategy a "living document".

Revise it as you go. Add to it as you complete items. This is where weekly planning is so valuable. Stay aware of which strategic items are your top priority, and focus your efforts on them.

Once you get used to executing your business strategy as everyday practice, you'll wonder why you ever functioned differently.

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