



"In preparing for battle, I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable"
— General Dwight Eisenhower

Business Planning Process

Checklist



Not Meeting
Expectations



Ready to Grow
to Next Level



Overwhelmed
by Growth

1. Input for your Planning Process. Did you:

- Start the planning process before the end of the current fiscal year?
- Gather information about:
 - The Economy
 - Your Competitors?
 - Trends in your markets?
 - Trends in your Industry?
 - Legislation affecting your industry?
- Identify, and quantify, new Opportunities?
- Identify new and existing Threats?
 - Did you evaluate the risk of the threats materializing?
 - Did you evaluate the impact of the threats if they materialize?
- Realistically evaluate your company's Strengths and Weaknesses?
- Get input from your:
 - Customers?
 - Suppliers?
 - Industry Association or Chamber of Commerce?Before setting your goals for the year?
- Involve the key people in the company in your planning process?
- Consider that if you achieve your financial goals for the coming year will you need more:
 - People?
 - Operating Equipment?
 - IT systems and infrastructure?
 - Sophisticated internal processes?
 - Cash to finance the growth?

NOTES:

2. Your Financial Forecast. When completing your financial forecast did you:

- Isolate separate sources of revenues e.g.
 - Sales to existing customers
 - Sales to new customers
 - Sales from existing products
 - Sales of new products?
 - How do they arrive at goals for the year/period?
- Include potential cost increases or reductions when calculating your cost of sales?
- Compare your gross margins against industry/external benchmarks?
- Budget expenses by:
 - Starting from zero and building them up?
 - Taking last year's actuals and applying an increase for inflation?
- Compare your EBITDA or operating margins against industry/external benchmarks?
- Document all of the assumptions you used in your forecast so that you can test them for reasonableness as the year unfolds?

NOTES:

3. Execution of your Plan. Did you:

- List all of the things that will have to be done by every area of the company in order to achieve your goals for next year?
- Prioritize the 20% that will have 80% of the impact on your goals for next year?
- Allocate your limited resources – equipment, people and financial - to the priorities?
- Check that you have sufficient resources?
- Prepare a detailed Action Plan for each of the priorities?
- Clearly identify who will be responsible for co-ordinating the resources to complete the Action Plan?
- Check that person understands they will be accountable if they fail?
- Ensure each department/division/ part of the company has goals that support the company's goals?
- Make sure each person in the company knows the company's goals for next year? And that they know their role?
- Set regular times to review the Action Plans? (E.g. doing a few each week and cover them all once a month.)
- Set dates and times for regular quarterly meetings at which you will review progress against the financial forecast? (What is the agenda? Who will attend and do they know what will they be expected to bring/present?)

NOTES: