

Success Planning: The Time is Now

Now is the time for businesses to create or update their strategic or “success” plans. The need and timing are extremely clear.

First, it is the end of the year. That means that that you pretty well know how 2008 will finish and in order to get strategic priorities accomplished during 2009; you must start now.

Secondly, we’re in an economic downturn, which is the best time to plan because:

- Difficult economic times force you to focus on exactly what you need to do.
- You need to know exactly how to spend resources so that every dollar and person hour is leveraged to the fullest.
- The changing environment may uncover opportunities that you won’t see unless you take a broad and strategic view of your landscape.

Third and most importantly, the current downturn is not just another cycle that will soon pass. We are experiencing a fundamental shift in our economic environment that will have a significant and lasting effect on the credit markets and consumer and business spending that businesses must take very seriously.

The time for a solid plan is now.

Don’t Like Strategic Planning?

That said, we can understand why some business people are tired of the term “strategic planning”. After all, how many times can you sit in a room for two days talking about strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that you already know and come up with the same list of things to do that never gets done?

This is not a productive use of your time, and it’s not going get your business to where you want it to be.

We recognize that there are some fundamental flaws in what many people think of as strategic planning. Therefore, we’re introducing the term Success Planning, and we offer these points on why it’s important and what you should strive to achieve from it...

- Of course “strategic planning” v. “success planning” is simply terminology, but the point is that planning for the success of your business is critical. It takes a thoughtful, strategic and holistic view of your market, your business and your environment to identify and focus on where you want your business to go and how to unlock its value.
- A winning success plan forces you to ask difficult questions, such as where do you want your business to be in the long term and what it’s really going to take to get there. Is it possible to achieve your goals with continued incremental changes or, especially given the fundamental shift in the economy, do you need to make changes to your strategy or operations?
- An effective success plan may sound complicated, but if done well, it actually simplifies things. It does not need to be pages and pages of narrative but rather a succinct explanation of only those strategies and actions that are critical to your long term success.
- If you don’t have a sound, up to date success plan, your business will continue to float along (or worse); chasing that next big opportunity, but never quite getting there.
- If your current strategic plan depends on economic circumstances and funding sources to be similar in the future to what we’ve become accustomed to; then your entire business is at risk until you develop a success plan and change course.
- If your planning efforts are indeed resulting in the same to do list again and again, then you need to change the way you plan.
- A mission statement is not a strategy. Mission statement exercises are very good for identifying the core values of a business, which is extremely important, but that is just one component of a success plan.
- With a highly effective success planning process, it is possible to transform your business into one that delivers greater value while at the same time reducing costs.



For additional information, contact:

Michael K. Vann
Michael.Vann@vann-group.com
413.543.2776

819 Worcester Street
Springfield, MA 01151
www.vann-group.com

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- With a highly effective success planning process, it is possible to align your plan, brand and operations so that your entire organization is working in sync and talking the same language.
- With a highly effective success planning process, it is possible to transform your entire organization into one that is “strategically-focused” in which resources are spent only on activities that advance the organization toward its long term goal.

In conclusion, our point is clear. The time is now to develop or update and execute a success plan for your business. You’ll find several additional white papers about how to plan on our website at http://www.vann-group.com/learning_center.asp; including Planning During A Downturn, Integrating Branding And Planning, and Creating Winning Strategy that enables you to make your competition irrelevant while also becoming a lower cost operation.



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