

Perfecting the Planning Process

The necessities of business execution often leave us bending to the temptations of rapid execution that call for us to cut corners and get straight to the moment of sales. But just as a military campaign cannot be expected to achieve without some semblance of a plan, so too should great success not be expected when one skips the planning phase and jumps straight into the battles of competing in the marketplace. Tudog understands the ease with which we can justify less planning and more execution, and has developed a 5 step process to make planning a more natural and easy part of business implementation.

Define Purpose and Principles

The planning phase begins with an exploration of the purpose and principles of your business. It is not enough to proclaim your purpose to be the pursuit of profit. You need to drill a bit further down and define your company. You also need to identify what you stand for and the principles that you embrace and will use to propel your business forward.

Envision Your Results

Sometimes called “outcome visioning”, the purpose of this step is to work backwards from the results you are striving to achieve by first envisioning the results and then determining what steps and resources are needed in order to reach the results. This is an exercise only and once the execution stage begins you need to once again reverse yourself and begin not from the end result backward, but rather from the first step moving forward.

Think Things Through

This may seem like a silly stage, but when one thinks about it, can you truly engage in planning without a phase that calls for brainstorming or thinking things through? Of course not. It is often omitted from “how to” lists, and yet, it is an essential and fundamental step that gets minimized (and sometimes even forgotten) precisely because some people think it is so evident. The thinking things through stage requires that you brainstorm about objectives and implementation strategies, the tactics you’ll employ and the resources you’ll commit. Once you have these debated and decided you actually have the beginning of a plan.

Organize

Once you’re ready for execution the actual implementation will be more orderly, and ultimately more successful, if you take the time to organize. Organization can be viewed in the broader sense, as in making sure that you have everything you need to enter the market already in place, or it can be viewed in the narrow sense, that all the pieces of the puzzle are in place and know what their respective roles are. By organizing, you are demonstrating respect to the plan you have developed, making sure that it is brought to fruition in the manner that was intended when the plan was developed.

Map Out Your Next Steps

No plan is really complete unless it has the follow up steps required to either capitalize on the first phase, or sustain the benefits achieved by phase one execution. You have not completed your plan until you have included next phase steps that serve to maximize your position and consolidate your gains. This phase is often ignored either because people don't think it is necessary or they are unable to see beyond the initial phase. Being short sighted can be costly, as the absence of a next stage plan could cause the collapse of operations.

Planning often gets the raw deal because we see it as an exercise in theory, whereas real market activity is viewed as the real world. Unfortunately, performance in the real world is a function of how sound the theories we deploy are, and how well our activities are executed. With this in mind, those who do not plan before they act, are proceeding at their risk.

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