

TURBO CHARGE YOUR LIFE

By Lynnea Hagen, MS, CDC

Let's take an imaginary trip. Let's imagine that you want to take a driving trip across the country. In fact, let's say that you want to drive from New York to San Francisco. There are more than a couple of different ways to head out on this trip. But, you have limited time and resources, AND you want this trip to be productive, enjoyable, and NOT stressful.

Which of the two following approaches would you use:

(A.) say, "I'm going to San Francisco", jump into your vehicle, start the engine, and leave with no planning? OR, would you:

(B.) create a clear mental picture of how you'd spend your time (and money) in San Francisco?

Would you know the reason for your trip? Would you make a list of things you'd like to do there? In other words, how would you prepare for the trip? Would you map out how to get there? Would you know who would be traveling with you, and what their responsibilities for the trip might be? Would you figure out how much money you would need to get there (not to mention, get back home)? How much time will you allow for the trip? How many stops will you need to make? And, finally, how will you keep from running out of fuel (emotionally, physically, and financially) before the trip is completed?

Using the above analogy, let's say that the destination is the success of your business.

How well can you define the following: your ultimate destination (your vision), why your business exists (your mission), how you measure your progress (your objectives), what ongoing steps you will need to perform (your strategies), and what projects need to be implemented (your action plans)?

In the examples above, most small business owners try to run their business using the (A.) approach. They have "sort of" named a destination ("I want to have a business doing____"), and set out with no real planning. With this approach, how much time and other resources are wasted on taking wrong turns, not having clarity about where they're going, why, with whom, and what exactly needs to be done to reach their destination? This is what I call the "Fire!, Ready, Aim" approach. What a backwards, time-wasting way to go!

If you're really serious about having a successful business, my challenge to you is to create a powerful, energizing, inspiring, step-by-step plan that clearly maps out everything needed to reach a destination called "Success". Using the elements of "The One Page Business Plan™ System" are listed the components below, along with a brief description of each.

But before we get started with the 5 steps for the Business Plan, I like to start with the

bonus step first, what I call the “+1 step”--your personal definition of “Success”. You see, your professional success is really only the vehicle to get you to what you truly want in your life...for yourself, your family, your free time, and for the legacy you’d want (or need) to leave for the world. This is the “turbocharging step”, and it must be addressed before we step into your official Business Plan, or what I call “The Success-Driven Plan”. So, let’s get started with the bonus step, shall we? Start by considering these things: What do you want? What does the word "success", the STATE of being in "success" mean to YOU? How will you know when you get there? Thoughtful answers to those questions are probably a lot closer than what you may think at first.

Start by answering these questions: What is the one area or condition in the state of the world that I'd like to impact? What would I like to do with and for my family? What kind of legacy would I like to leave? How would I like to spend my leisure time? Where? How often? With whom? How would I like to expand my giving back to the world? How would I like to expand/educate/grow myself? Apply the idea “make the future happen inside of you” as often as you can. It is a great way to create a “bridge” to what you want.

Ask yourself several times a day, "Is what I'm doing at this moment leading me to what I most want?"

The thing is, if you can decide what you want, you can also decide how to get it. Most of us gloss over the “what I want” questions too quickly....so, please, take time to think deeply about these things.

Action item –“a week of wants”:

Spend the next week mulling over where you want to be in 18 to 24 months.

Write things down as they come to you, or do a "brain dump" or a "heart storm" (as opposed to a brain storm) session alone or with your "nearest and dearest".

Write in a journal or carry index cards for the whole time.

Here are the rules: No edits allowed and no trying to answer the “how” questions.

Just let it flow, and jot down your ideas. Within a week, you will have plenty of inspiration and ideas... not only a nice beginning to your new map, but the proper sequence of "Ready, aim fire!" will be put in place.

NOW, you’re ready to create a powerful One Page Business Plan.

Let’s get started!

1. Vision--“What are you building?”

Describe with great clarity what your business will look like in 3 to 5 years. How much revenue will it generate, with how many employees, serving what geography, serving what type of client, and providing what service? You may even want to specify what technologies you will use, or what ideals you will incorporate into your company culture.

If you have a goal of giving 10% of your profits to a favorite cause, include that, too. In other words, dare to dream...and dare to dream specifically and boldly!

2. Mission--“Why does your business exist?”

When working with a clients to create business plans, this is very often the area on which we spend the most time...and for good reason. A well defined mission should not only inspire you and your employees, but customers as well. To do so, it should encapsulate the reason why, on a deeper level, you have chosen to be in this business, and what sets your business apart. It's timeless. (Examples: The History Channel: "Where history comes alive"; Nature Conservancy: "Saving the last great places"; Lenscrafters: "Helping people see better, one hour at a time") A mission can compel and impel you (and others) to action. And, when the going gets rough, or you're feeling discouraged, it acts as the inspiration and energizer to keep you going.

3. Objectives—"What are the specific measures? How will we know if we're successful?"

Objectives must be graphable. They define your goals...what you need less of, or more of, to be successful. Maybe you want more revenue, profits, clients, or store locations. Great! How much more? Now, what do you want less of? Inventory, printing costs, automotive costs? Terrific! How much less?

Stated another way, what numbers do you need in order to assess the health, the pulse of your business? What vital statistics/success measurements would be on a single page that can be faxed to you while you're lying on a beach in Tahiti?

4. Strategies-- "What are the right things we have to do over time?"

How will you grow and manage this business? What are the RIGHT things to do over time to reach your vision and objectives? Strategies provide a framework for what you will and will NOT do. They establish best practices, set the direction on such areas as marketing, product pricing, Internet presence, strategic alliances, target markets, employee retention, and positioning. Examples include: Doing a product roll-out at a major trade show, forming a strategic alliance with a "power partner", setting up a testimonial or referral program.

5. Action Plans--"What is the work to be done?"

What projects do you need to work on this year? Who is responsible for each of these projects, and when will the projects be completed (what date)? For example, action plans may include: by the end of April, schedule and announce 3 dates for my workshops; write and submit 2 articles by the end of May; put 12 speaking engagements on my calendar by April 30th, complete new CD products by June 30th. Each of these is a project, which will support my objectives and strategies.

So, there you have it....6 steps to turbocharging your success. Are these steps simple? Yes. Are they simplistic? Absolutely not! Writing plans is difficult. Quality thinking and writing take time. But don't worry about getting it "right", just get it in writing. It can be edited later; undoubtedly in 3 months it will be significantly different, and probably much better.

We all have the ability (and the RIGHT!) to design our future, our lives, our success for as long as we can breathe and dream. By putting planning into the mix, you'll have the map and compass to reach your destinations and achieve your dreams far more quickly and better than you could have imagined. So, dream, plan, and move into your

greatness! ~ Copyright 2011 Lynnea Hagen and The Abundance Company
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