



Planning for Success: *Mastering Balance*

Have you noticed how busy everyone seems these days? There's no time for anything except work, work and more work. How many times have you heard people say, "I'm so busy I don't even have time to think?"

The reality is that if a business wants to be successful there must be investment in working "on the business" rather than "in the business." Working "on the business" is doing the things that enable the business to add value to the end user – the customer.

When a business takes time out to assess why so much time is spent "in the business" rather than "on the business", the reasons are usually a lack of ownership, accountability communication and systems.

A business plan can help flush these out of the business and free up time to "work on the business." A business plan if constructed properly will create [a blueprint to improve efficiency, eliminate duplication, enhance motivation, establish ownership and accountability](#), and in doing so free up time to work "on the business." A business plan is a communication tool.

When constructing a business plan it is essential to [do the planning away from the workplace](#). This immediately breaks the "no time to think" syndrome forcing you to spend time focusing "on the business." When you try to work with in the office environment you continually get distracted.

The second point to successful planning is [including key team members](#). Including team members establishes ownership; it may be the first time team members have been asked to contribute to the planning process. This builds motivation and accountability. Involving key team members also captures knowledge within the business that can fall between the cracks.

The third point is to [use an open forum](#). It is well proven that a team of people can create a better solution to a problem than an individual. Open forums stimulate ideas for the business.

The fourth point to planning success is to [write it down](#). The plan must be captured and documented in a structured format to allow monitoring, measuring and tracking. The document must detail actions that need to be taken to ensure success of the plan. [Measurement allows the team to monitor progress towards achieving the plan outcomes](#). Without these the plan is an ineffective tool.

Finally the power of any plan is the [implementation](#). A common business failing is going to the effort of developing a plan but getting so involved "in the business" that you fail to bring the plan down off the shelf.

Implementation involves discipline. The plan must be a living document in the business that is reviewed regularly as part of a meeting discipline. The plan should also [link directly to the key performance indicators](#) of the business and these should flow on to individual team members.

Following these simple steps will help ensure a business is successful in achieving outcomes. The key is achieving all of them all of the time rather than achieving some of them some of the time.

In summary the five key points to successful planning are:

- 1) Dedicating time away from the workplace
- 2) Including all relevant team members in the process
- 3) Brainstorming
- 4) Documenting the plan in a structured format that includes measurement
- 5) To be disciplined with the implementation