

The Four Myths of Effective Strategic Planning

By Gary Harpst
Small Business TV: www.SBTV.com

Here are some actual statements overheard from owners of small businesses over the years about strategic planning. It's time to set the record straight and debunk some of these myths!

Myth #1: "We don't need a strategic plan! Everything changes too quickly anyway!"

The truth is that every business needs some form of plan to guide its actions and efforts. It's too easy to "drift off course" when business owners are faced with the chaos of daily operations.

Myth #2: "Our strategic plan is in a binder on my shelf - where it needs to be."

Having a written strategic plan is critical, but so is having it available for all team members. The real benefit of a written plan is communication of the plan and ready access to it. How can you expect everyone to work toward your mission, vision, values and goals - if they never see it and don't have time to make it their own? Even the best strategic plan will never produce the desired results if the people who have to execute it don't know what it is.

Myth #3: "Our strategic plan will automatically produce results."

Execution of any strategic plan will only take place when your staff act and buy into the details of the plan. To execute the plan, staff members need to understand and embrace the necessary changes of how they go about their own activities. According to Dwight Eisenhower, "Plans are nothing; planning is everything." Without frequent, systematic review by the owner and the leadership team, execution will not take place and your plan quickly falls by the wayside. Plans only produce results when measured and monitored.

Myth #4: "We can do strategic planning ourselves - without any help."

The fact is, it's very difficult to both participate in and facilitate the same meeting. For most small business leaders, the urge to problem solve on the spot is too great. Using a trusted outside facilitator who is trained to manage the flow of the meeting can overcome uneven participation, shifting from brainstorming to problem solving, diving into details, etc.

An effective strategic plan - one that is well thought out, well communicated and well executed by the staff members of the business is the best competitive advantage possible. It's what separates good companies from great companies and great companies - from excellent organizations.

Attention: COMCAST Users

This is an important message to those of you who use Comcast for your internet service and email. Comcast has put a new policy in place in the last week in which they filter your email and they choose which mail you will get and which you will not get. They have decided that anyone who sends more than six emails per second to the Comcast servers must be a spammer so they are blocking them. This means that any newsletter you sign up for, anything you get regularly from any large company like sale notices, bank info, stock info, etc could be blocked without you even knowing it.

Comcast has blocked us several times this week and we are trying to reason with them to get it resolved. If you have Comcast service you should contact them and complain about this practice. They will say they are trying to protect you against spam but they are mainly trying to reduce traffic to their equipment so they don't have to upgrade it to carry the load. .. and they are doing this without regard for YOU. Other Internet providers do not do this... only Comcast.

You should contact Comcast if you care about them filtering and blocking your email. If you could send us a copy of anything you get from them, it would be helpful. We have the block removed right now but we have to call them every day to do so and it's a real pain. They are asking businesses to make major modifications to mail servers to accommodate them and it's something that just cannot be done nor should we have to. No other Internet Service Provider does this... only Comcast! It seems they are forgetting that you are paying them for a service!

Summer Sun Fuels Enthusiast Spending

The time of year when consumers purchase specialty equipment often dictates planning for inventory levels and new product unveilings. So when are consumers most likely to purchase custom parts and accessories for their rides? Data taken from the 2007 Automotive Lifestyles survey of enthusiast magazine subscribers shows that consumers are most likely to purchase specialty equipment during the spring and summer months of the "driving season" with both car and light-truck owners following the same purchase behavior pattern.

Source: SEMA

TO ALL PWA MEMBERS:

A financial statement is available by contacting the PWA office.