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Strategic Planning Steps For Optimum Business Management

By Paolo Basauri

Strategic Planning Steps Overview

The Strategic Planning Steps philosophy/business system is an organizational tool that is used by groups and corporations globally to refine their goals and maximize their resources. Drawing from the concepts of strategic military planning, the Strategic Planning process is one way in which businesses strive to attain a competitive edge. Strategic planning involves defining goals, creating an adaptable business plan and measuring core competencies of staff to increase productivity and results. The understanding and implementation of Strategic Planning Steps can significantly affect a company's ability to maximize revenue and growth. The steps have been used effectively in many fields of business, education and government to formulate productive business systems and resource management solutions.

Strategic Planning Steps Defined

While there are several different approaches to implementing Strategic Planning Steps , most models use the following definitions:

* Mission definition : The mission definition stage of Strategic Planning encourages an organization to develop a brief description of purpose to Inform potential stockholders, employees and customers what they can expect from the company. >From the mission definition, a mission statement can be developed that serves as a company's calling card and core focus description.

* Vision/Trend Analysis : The next facet of Strategic Planning Steps directs a company to analyze current market trends and make committed decisions about where the business is heading. Defining long term goals and visualizing the future of the organization can help to focus current activities and important financial decisions.

* Strategic Objectives : Once long term goals have been set, the strategic objectives phase consists of formulating actual business plans to achieve the visualized goals. One acronym used frequently in this stage of Strategic Planning Steps is SMART. SMART stands for the type of objectives to be developed to fully realize the company's long term goals. These objectives include:

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- o S - Specific objectives
- o M - Measurable objectives
- o A - Achievable objectives
- o R - Resource–based, realistic objectives
- o T - Time–frame assessed objectives

* Critical Success Factors : Important milestones and achievements key to goal realization should be identified at the critical success factor stage of Strategic Planning. Singling out these factors provides

an easy means for measuring the ongoing success of the business plan.

* Actions to be Implemented : After critical success factors have been identified, the next phase involves the development of action plans need to realize success. Specific tasks and organizations management strategies are designed to effectively implement the business plan. Task management is often defined by the core competencies required for each position in the company.

* Performance Analysis and Progress Measurement : The last of the most common steps is comprised of formulating methods by which to measure the organization's progress. Comprehensive performance analysis tools and measurement criteria are developed to effectively monitor the success of the current system. These tools can be used to report both internally and externally on the progress and growth of the company.

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Three Planning Myths

By Denise O'Berry

Are you — like 70% of business owners — working without a plan? Here are three myths that need to be dispelled about strategic planning for small business.

1. It has to be formal — Not so. The value of a strategic plan for your small business is in putting the ideas on paper, creating action steps that will get you where you want to go and implementing those action steps.

2. I'm too small — Not so. Even a one–person business can benefit from a strategic plan. A strategic plan can help you make decisions about time management and budget. Use your strategic plan to help you determine whether to attend an event or advertise in a publication. It's a check and balance tool.

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3. A strategic plan is like a ball and chain — Not so. It's your plan. Too many business owners feel like once it's on paper, it can't be changed. Wrong! It should be an active document that gets reviewed and updated at least monthly, if not weekly. You're the business owner, you wrote it, you know what's happening in your market — adjust as necessary.

Denise O'Berry helps small business owners take action to grow their business. Find out more at

<http://www.whatspossible.com>

Three Planning Myths

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