



The Need for a Company Business Plan

Companies succeed when every employee is fully aware of the company's stated vision, mission, and short and long-term goals. Companies succeed when every employee understands that they are equally important in achieving that mission to make this success happen. A viable plan must be put in place, and every employee should have access to that plan, and should have access to a simple concise operations manual. These documents should be readily available and should not be hidden away in a file cabinet.

A good plan functions like a lighthouse in bad weather. It is a beacon of direction, forever blinking in the night, guiding the way to success and prosperity. It is like a road map through a complex maze of twisted roadways. It is like the blueprint for a complicated building. It focuses the efforts and guides the entire team of employees and management to the desired goals. The formal plan is a communication vehicle that stays strong and true, leading everyone on a common journey. It shares the vision, sets the course, and encourages a team-oriented work environment.

The business plan leverages employee talents and sets out the organizational structure and defines the various positions and their responsibilities. It identifies products and services and defines how they will be sold and marketed. A quality business plan makes projections that allow for performance measurements. These measurements in turn help to identify any issues or problems in the company that need to be corrected to stay on track and reach the short and long-term goals.

Although small companies may be able to function without a formal plan, this prospect is not reasonable for larger companies. Since many companies start out as small family-owned businesses, it is possible for them to evolve into larger entities without a plan, but introducing one is a professional necessity.

Questions to Ask About Your Plan

- Do you have a comprehensive business plan?

- Does your business plan act like a road map, guiding the way?
- How often is your business plan being used?
- Have you used both *internal* and *external* input and expertise to construct your business plan?
- Are all employees acting within those guidelines set forth by the business plan?
- Is your business plan structured only for obtaining capital or is it also acting as a road map for your business?
- Does your plan help to identify problems before they become insurmountable?
- Does your plan increase motivation among employees?
- Does your plan contain a comprehensive marketing plan?
- Is your plan physically appealing and easy to navigate?