

# **STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN**

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Last July during a meeting with our accountant, the question came up—"Do you have a long range business plan?" I replied "yes" and was promptly asked, "Where?" I responded by pointing to my head. "Put it down on paper", I was told—I replied "Do you have one down on paper?" The answer was "No" and that is part of my point—most of us have a short-term plan down on paper but not a long-term plan down on paper.

Once you're committed to doing it, you quickly discover it is actually FUN! I have dedicated at least one hour a day (after regular working hours), since July, to this project. I'm at the stage of turning it back to our people for their input, now that much of the formatting, study, research, thought and implementing are complete from my point of view.

Why should we do all this in the first place? What's the purpose? What type of a plan should we have?

The reason to do it is to put it down on paper so you (all) really know the plan and are on the same page.

The purpose of Strategic Planning of course is to:

- A) Assess your current status
- B) Determine your future status and goals
- C) Develop the appropriate action to achieve those goals

The type of plan we have is Bi-focal, that is:

1. A short tem plan (1-2 years) and
2. A long-term plan (5-10 years).

In our Strategic Vision we are looking ahead-making our future—controlling our destiny. I heard someone say at the SEDA meeting last summer in Bermuda, that when you drive down the expressway we don't just look out the rear view mirror! Strategic Vision is looking ahead—it's a lot like driving your car down the expressway—your main vision is straight ahead with occasional glances side to side (to see where you have been—also maybe to check on someone else gaining on you). The point is you can't just look forward, but it is the main focus.

In your Strategic Business Plan you are planning for change, now. Ask yourself "Where are we headed if we continue as we are?" Avoid those paradigms that hold you back.

First you must set a target as to when you will start this essential task. Then begin. Select a format that works for you. I did a lot of study here—I selected an excellent article by Dr. Lawrence J. Lad, Associate Professor of Management at Butler University, from ERA (Electronic Representative Association) magazine "The Representor" October 1991 issue. There is also software available to construct your plan and many other fine sources such as the CPMR (Certified Professional Manufacturers Representative) course offered from your SEMAA membership. CPMR has an on-going 3-year session study of the elements of a Business Plan.

The plan is simple-really. First decide where you want to go, (with your company) and then plan how and when you want to arrive there.

Put it down on paper-share it within your organization-I promise you-you'll be glad you did! If you still need a "Kick Start" give me buzz - I'll help you out!

Think about it.

George J. Hayward