The Simplest Business Plan Ever

By Caroline Jordan, MBA

If you're a self employed professional like I am, you know how tough it is to find any time at all to do any business planning. Doing a full business plan is a must if you're planning to seek financing or investors, but most solo professionals don't need anything that complicated.

Don't get me wrong, business planning is one of the most important things you need to do to succeed in your one man or woman show. Without planning you'll drift aimlessly from one crisis to the next and one idea to the next, never really getting anything done.

So, what's a solo pro to do? Here's what I do in my own business:

My business plan consists of one page with very little on it. It simply lists the three goals that I must achieve this year. Then, I list a statement for each goal: To achieve Goal #1 I need to….This is followed by two to five activities or action items I need to do to make that happen.

That's it. That's the whole plan. The beauty is the simplicity. I simply cannot handle more than that. I don't have a staff. I don't have "people". Everything has to be structured so that I can get it done simply and systematically.

So, let's say one of my goals is to increase sales by a certain number, like $25,000. I then ask myself, "What do you need to do to make that happen?" Maybe I want to develop an ebook or add a new service. How many potential or current customers will I need to reach? How much time will I need to develop the book or service? How will I market it?

From those answers, I develop my schedule. What do I need to do monthly, weekly, daily? I break it up into small pieces that take an hour or less. For example, if I decide I need to send out 100 marketing postcards in a month, I break it into 25 cards a week. Then, I put it on my schedule each week, just as I do my appointments with clients.

To keep myself on track, I place my mini plan in front of my keyboard so every morning it's the first thing I see. I also include a note to myself. It reminds me that "Nothing Else Matters." I follow it with my company slogan: Get Knowledge. Get Focus. Get Results.

Complex plans take tons of time to develop and many (if not most) end up gathering dust on a shelf. Using a simple plan improves your focus and helps you to achieve great results.

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