



Map Out the Route:

Plan the time to Plan Business Developments ... and Honour it!

“How will my Non-Traditional Business Plan (a.k.a. my [3-year Vision](#) – see last month’s article) ever come to fruition, when I’m so busy putting out fires and dealing with crises every day?” you ask. **By planning, that’s how.**

Strategy #2: Plan the time to Plan ... and Honour it!

After attending one of our full-day workshops which provides an introduction to our [7 Simple Strategies for Success](#), a client informed me that he had reflected more on his business in the previous 14 days (before calling me) than he had in the 14 years he had been in business.

He enrolled for the year-long training & coaching program (The Trade-Contractors’ Business College) because, he said, he was tired of just **putting his head down and ploughing through the day ... day after day after day**. The workshop showed him that there are other ways of doing it and the ideas that re-surfaced within him motivated him to get the help he needed to **change “the way things are done around here.”**

Other clients tell me they’re fed up with **struggling, sacrificing & settling for less**; fed up with putting out fires just to make a living. They want a business that runs somewhat smoothly most of the time, allowing energy to deal with a few urgent issues that come up, as opposed to constantly dealing with urgent issues, leaving no time for creating a business that’s under their control ... creating a business that continues to **run profitably, even when they’re not there running it.**

Planning is what it takes.

Honouring the planning seems to be the hardest part, though. When you see what’s slotted into that chunk of time that you’re about to brush off, what are the consequences for brushing off that task? In other words, what are the benefits you had in mind for having put that task into your planning for that particular day at that particular time? If there’s no benefit to getting that item done, then there’s no big deal about not doing it. Therefore ... you need to ask yourself: *“If there’s no benefit, why is this in my calendar?”* Brushing this task off today makes it easier to brush more tasks off tomorrow ... and the next day.

You need to know the value of everything you do. You need to assess its importance and its urgency. If you determine it’s important, ask yourself what the benefit of doing it is. **Become clear on the benefit.** Then ask yourself what the outcome would be if it never gets done.

Prioritizing your activities makes it easier to plan your time. A, B, C & D every activity on your endless “to-do” list.

D is for Dump ... immediately. Don’t even give it a second thought.

“C” category activities/tasks can be done by others. One of the hardest things for a self-employed person to do is to hand the reins over to his/her staff. Why is this? Because your staff aren’t competent ... or because they’re not trust-worthy? If they’re incompetent at the task, have they received proper training? If so, why are they still there? If they’re not trust-worthy ... *Why in heaven’s name are you tolerating their being there?*

Create systems for everything you do ... and I mean everything ... and it will be so much easier to train others to do those tasks in your place. Not only that, but it will also ensure the survival of your business should (heaven forbid) something drastic ever happen to you.

If you have a “C” task that isn’t worth training someone else to do, give yourself a short time-frame during which you will either do it yourself or the task becomes a “D” priority. “D” stands for Dump, remember, so quickly dump it. 30 days works for me, and I have **Dumped** a few costly issues. I know, however, that the pressure looking at, yet not finalizing, the tasks slows me down sufficiently to cost me in productivity day after day after day. **Just DUMP it!**

“B” tasks are those important enough for your business to invest time in doing, but they’re not so urgent that they take priority over an “A” task. If they can be delegated, slot time into your agenda to train someone else on these tasks. They’re important enough that they’ve been rated “B”, so it requires thorough training to have them done well by others. If you currently don’t have a lot of time during which you can train others on these, then put them on the back burner with a date in your calendar to bring them forward. Even a half-hour’s training each week will get them moving, though, and we can **always** find 30 minutes of poorly-used time in each week.

Alternatively, they can and will wait until you take the time to address these tasks. Again, even if you only spend ½- hour per week on them, they’re getting done. It’s like reading a book one page per day. Once you get in the flow you can easily finish 2 pages/day, and as you develop the habit of picking up that book every single day you build the momentum to read faster and finish sooner.

“A”-priority tasks, obviously, take top priority on which you, ideally, spend the vast majority of your time. Making “training” an “A” priority will create a business that can be run much more smoothly because the business now has systems on which everyone is trained. Systems are written down. Written documents are, in effect, training manuals.

When there’s a turn-over in staff it’s easy to train the new hire on the existing systems because

- others know how the system runs;
- there are training manuals for easy reference;
- employees can train the new hires, and you only need to follow-up to be sure the jobs are being done the way you want things to be done around here. Finding weaknesses in your employees’ training of new hires provides valuable information for refresher training for existing staff, as well.

Planning for the growth of your business starts with your 3-year vision (the non-traditional Business Plan as mentioned in the previous issue).

1-year plans are then done by the principal (business owner or manager) off-site, in a 1-day retreat. You simply extract your 1-year plan from your 3-year Vision.

90-day goals can involve the key employees. You can either set the 90-day goals yourself or, sharing the 1-year plan, ask others to work on the 90-day goals with you. I recommend a ½-day for this.

Monthly Management Meetings include all of your key personnel, making sure you’re on track to reach your 90-day goals. Agendas ensure brief and concise meetings. No doubt you’re well aware of how easy it is to get off-topic and then not cover all the issues on the list before running out of time. Have you ever left a meeting wondering what, precisely, was decided in the meeting? Be sure to appoint someone as Secretary of the meeting, who distributes the “Minutes” to everyone soon after the meeting took place – not at next month’s meeting. These Minutes show who agreed, or was assigned, to complete which tasks ... and **by when**.

Weekly Reflection is such a powerful exercise for which so few people honour the time. Reflecting on your achievements from last week and mapping out the current week is the best 15 minutes spent every single week of the rest of your life in your business. My clients complete a WRAR – *Weekly Reflections & Achievements Review* document. 3 pages of fill-in-the-blanks. Super-simple. If you’d like a copy I’ll be happy to send you one. Just ask.

Daily tasks make up your “to-do list.” Be sure there is a time value beside each of the items on the to-do list and that these items get

- delegated to the proper person; and
- followed up on by the end of the day; ... or
- slotted into the appropriate chunk of time in your daily agenda.

3 HHWs are extracted from your own personal daily tasks. You ensure these **3 tasks** (only 3) are completed **before your head hits the pillow that night**.

The key to planning your business’ development and growth is to assign yourself appropriate chunks of time into the same days of each week. The chunks of time remain the same; the specific tasks differ from week-to-week – tasks such as

- individual meetings with your key people;
 - team meetings (scheduled weekly if you’re starting this system, then bi-weekly and eventually monthly);
 - training individuals on those tasks you’re delegating;
 - estimating, if you still do this;
 - reviewing invoices before they’re sent out;
 - visiting those “A” & “B” customers I’ll talk about in Strategy #6;
 - connecting with the referrals from your A & B customers;
 - Business Development – this is when you’re moving your ideas for business growth forward;
 - whatever **your** tasks still are (after you’ve delegated many to your Championship Support Team which I’ll discuss in Strategy #5).
- This way, you know when a task relating to eg. training comes up that it will happen next Wednesday afternoon between 1 and 2 pm (as an example).

It not only takes systems to smoothly run your business, but it takes systems to **grow** your business, as well.

We can plan ‘til the cows come home,
but only when we **follow through** on our planning will we
reap the rewards we envisioned when we created our 3-year vision.

This leads us into ...

Strategy #3: FOLLOW THROUGH on your IDEAS ... all the way to pay-dirt! ... by holding yourself visibly accountable.



Fun Has Never Been So Profitable

Hugh Brannon of Carolina Handcrafted Woodworks, LLC says:

Before working with Lynne I felt so out of control! I was doing great work and getting great referrals but couldn’t stay on top of anything. I was always working — evenings, weekends, you name it — but I never had money in my pocket. I felt like I was in over my head, like I was drowning.

Within 9 months of first working with MLJ International we have doubled our business. I rarely work Fridays anymore and I leave everything to other people; which makes my wife happy, as well.

It is a leap of faith because you think you’re “spending” money but I recuperated my investment within 1 or 2 deals ... just by making a couple of tweaks.



As general contractor for her home, Lynne identified that while contractors are great on the tools, they struggle to balance money & time ... especially time in which to have **FUN**. As a solution Lynne created [The Trade-Contractors' Business College](#), a year-long coaching & training program for business owners in the construction industry, covering [7 Simple Strategies for Success](#) which are key to every successful business.

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Contact Lynne today by voice or text at **613-484-3861**. Tell her you read this article and save 50% on a [Diagnostic Assessment](#) of your Business. Still comes with the **300% ROI Guarantee!**