
7 Secrets to a Successful Business Game Plan

By Lorna Riley, CSP

760-639-4020

The most successful businesses use a sound strategy for creating their successes by design, not default. A game plan is what drives you in the direction you wish to go. Can you imagine trying to steer a car without a wheel? Sail a boat without a rudder? The same can be said of trying to run a business without a plan. Imagine asking the Chairman of the Board of any successful company, *How did you get to where you are today?* Chances are s/he wouldn't say, *I don't know. I just kept showing up at work and they kept promoting me!* Here are seven suggestions for setting your course and getting you where you want to go.

1. Write a Results-Driven Vision and Mission Statement

A business plan starts with a vision and mission of what's possible. Only after you've decided what the future looks like will you be able to take the right tactics along the way. It sounds basic, but many people *react* to business opportunities instead of creating them. Once you've an imagined picture of how you see yourself in the future, you can then choose the specific strategies needed to get you there. Let's say you see yourself as a "creative force" in your industry--making headlines or setting trends, your vision then is *how you see the details of that manifestation*. Where are you? Who is with you? How do you help others? Try writing out your vision statement by answering the question, *I see myself as ...* Your vision will most likely *not* be clearly focused, but the more detailed it

is at the outset, the more likely you are to manifest it in the future. Don't worry about it being perfect now—plan on it evolving over time. What you conceive, you can achieve.

Your mission statement will flow from your vision. It's a short phrase or declaration of how you plan to make your vision a reality, or the *means* to the *end* result. Avoid writing long, flowery mission statements that try to be all things to all people. The more specific your mission, the more likely you are to achieve it. You may have one overarching mission, and many smaller missions within the Big Mission. Write a short phrase on how you plan to achieve your vision. You may begin with something such as, "My mission is to...i.e. develop a highly trafficked web site." This defines your scope of focus (high traffic/visibility, versus just a web "brochure." This will shape the strategies you choose to reach the mission—search engine optimization, daily web updates etc.. Other mission examples: "every learner on-line; a laptop in every home; beat XYZ Company, be the top producer of my organization."

What most people fail to understand is that your mission statement doesn't truly describe the results you want. What you want are the *results* achieved from successful completion of the mission, or a *results-driven statement*. To do this, after writing your short mission phrase, add the words *so that*. Then answer that query. You will now be defining your true *end* result destination—one that will hold up no matter what else changes around you. Your mission statement might change (the means to the end), but your "so that" ending will most likely remain in tact. This becomes your results-driven target. For example, the mission, "develop a highly trafficked web site *so that* we become the most profitable provider of on-line software," defines the true desired result—*most profitable*

provider of on-line software. It may or may not happen with a highly trafficked site. That mission may change, but the “so that” results-driven mission will not.

2. Compress Your Time.

Joe Gondolfo sold one billion dollars worth of insurance in just one year. That’s what great time management in business does—helps to compress selling time. One of the best ways of doing more business in less time is to build a straight referral business. If your goal is to build your business without having to overtly market your services such as direct mail, advertising, or “cold calls” (now illegal in most areas), then focus your efforts on building your referral base. One way is to simply ask, however there are dozens of other techniques you can use such as planting seeds of suggestion, writing a booklet, publishing a regular newspaper or magazine column, joining referral clubs, or giving speeches to local service clubs. You’ll find many strategies in the book, *76 Ways to Build a Straight Referral Business, ASAP*, and it’s companion *Straight Referrals Home Study Guide*. Visit www.straightreferrals.com to learn more.

3. Find Out What Others are Doing and Do Something Else

No matter what you think you do, one way or another everyone is in the innovation business. For example, you may want to find more innovative ways to provide service to your customers. In a commodity market, differentiation is critical. Find out what you’re good at and do more of it. One teacher-turned-real-estate agent was exceptional in math and listening skills. He became well known in the community for his ability to negotiate challenging transactions. An interior designer wanted to do more than just decorate model homes. Instead, she found builders *before* they began their construction design and

helped them to conceptualize the larger possibilities of the project. She worked with a builder to design an entire French village neighborhood, creating a unique edge to what would have otherwise been just another housing tract.

4. Partner

Partnering means no one knows who works for whom anymore. We are all in business together. Today's world is one of collaboration—even of so-called competitors. One financial planner became the top broker in his office by setting up a partnering relationship with an accountant. They would refer clients to each other who needed the other's services. They created a “seamless” business with each other so that the client thought it was all part of the financial services. You can partner with competitors when they offer something you don't, and vice versa. Working together you can create a greater presence in the market than you could on your own.

5. Profit from Change.

We live in an unstable, unpredictable world. Take advantage of trends by building them into your business. Some of the biggest are:

- a. **Cocooning**—More and more people are ordering what they need and staying home to save money and feel safe. How can you help reach more people at home?
- b. **Speed**--offer faster service options for those who will pay.
- c. **Baby Boomers**--this group is a major influence and has trouble making up their minds. They love everything and have eclectic tastes. Show them many possibilities and help them to make decisions.

- d. **Small Indulgences**--People may not be able to afford big luxuries, but still have enough to invest in a "small indulgence." Offer "indulgences" by showing what people can do on a limited budget and build over time.
- e. **Save Our Society**--join an environmental cause and advertise that you use "environmentally friendly" products, or that portions of their purchase go to support an environmental cause.
- f. **Don't Make Me Think**—be easy to do business with. People need help sorting through the vast sea of information. Your web site should never prompt your visitor to ask, "What do I do here? Where is? What's this?" Make all of your promotional material clearly spell out what you do so that people don't have to hunt for the benefits.

6. Redefine What You're Selling So People Will Buy

Educate your public on what you do by selling what they're *really* looking for. Ask questions to reveal your prospect's hierarchy of values. People don't just buy "stuff." What they're *really* buying are "end values" such as comfort, peace of mind, adventure, fantasy, good times, entertainment, safety, security, stimulation, convenience, and beauty. Ask questions to learn which of these are the most important in priority order, then sell to their values, not yours.

7. Speak Up!

Develop an informative 30-minute presentation that teaches your buying public something useful about your products or services. Offer to speak for free at first to local service clubs to perfect your presentation. You'll develop community awareness and

make excellence use of leveraging your time. Instead of educating one-on-one, you'll be reaching hundreds all at once. As you improve, take your speech on the road--go to conventions at spouse programs or breakout sessions. Charge an honorarium because your information is valuable. How about a swap at a spa? Health spas often offer evening programs to their guests. In exchange for your presentation you get a free spa day! You can also travel for free by presenting your program on cruise ships. Your fee is a complimentary trip to Greece, Cabo, Alaska... Is this any way to run a business? You bet it is!

Contact Lorna Riley for a complete list of training programs and speeches:

Lorna@lornariley.com

Or call 760-639-4020.

For more resources and complete listing of services, please visit our sites at:

www.straightreferrals.com

www.otclearning.com

www.lornariley.com