

The Chess Game of Life

The Success Series: Business Planning Made Simple

By Stefan Swanepoel

Business planning is like a game of chess. It requires thought, the evaluation of options, identification of hurdles, organization of priorities, the creation of strategies and the decisiveness of execution. Playing chess without planning is foolish. Planning helps coordinating moves, actions, defenses and attacks. So it is in life, where planning saves money, time, effort and renders the best result. The outcome of a well thought out, well-conceptualized business plan is long-term progressive positive advancement regardless of the business climate. To make the process of planning easier we have taken the key concepts from the iSucceed Success Series (www.iSucceed.com) and offer it as a 5 step simple plan.

1. See the big picture

Your business planning activities should include: An assessment of your current situation; A definition of your business focus and strategic intent; A clear vision of what results you want to achieve by objectives; A list of action activities that you will utilize to achieve your goals; And an understanding of why you need regular analysis and occasional revisions of your game plan.

2. Plan ahead

One of the top reasons for failure is the lack of foreword thinking. Every business requires constant analysis and planning. If your business is succeeding know why. If it is not, find out why. Examine your company's strengths and weaknesses. Review your company vision and focus, then set your objectives and determine the results you want to see. Perform a reality check and adjust accordingly.

3. Anticipate alternatives

Understanding what all could go wrong and analyzing the dangers before they occur, minimizes the risk of being caught off guard. Examine your competition. Evaluate your market. Based on possible events, forecast worse case scenarios and prepare contingency plans, and never use all your pieces on one strategy alone. Always make sure that you have a "Plan B."

4. Remain focused on the goal

Great plans fail because people hesitate, lose focus or interest or just plain forget. Don't get sidetracked by playing another game or wasting resources on less important activities. Remain focused at all times on the overall objective you have. In chess, it is to checkmate your opponent's King. What's yours?

5. Execute your plan

Stay on track and push forward with determination, tenacity and persistence. Maximize all the chess pieces you have available. Keep your eyes on the long term objective as well as on the immediate priorities. Skillful execution is delivering the winning blow when you need it the most. It is not good positions that win games, but good moves.

In Conclusion

World chess champion (1948-63) Mikhail Botvinnik said "Chess is the art which expresses the science of logic." So remember as you go through the steps of business planning for the first time or the tenth time, it is important to see yourself not only as the Architect of your own business, but as a Pioneer, seeking the right path to some new and distant frontier.

Acknowledgement

This article is part of "The Success Series" by Stefan Swanepoel author of 11 books and whitepapers, and a celebrated speaker to more than 250,000 people on five continents. Stefan is CEO of The RealtyU[®] Group, the largest real estate education, training and career development company (www.RealtyU.com) in the US.