

Your 2015 Business Planning Strategy

by Victoria Gillespie

Focusing your thoughts and creating a solid business plan does not have to be an overwhelming undertaking.

The best laid plans are often the most simplistic. A simple plan is usually the most effective because it is easier to follow and requires less effort to create. The key is to develop a useful plan that takes into consideration both your personal and professional goals. This tool should be a useful document that you refer to on a regular basis and use as a roadmap for the coming year.

Step 1 – Create Your Vision & Goals for the Coming Year

Take some time to reflect on your past year: what went well and what could be improved upon for the coming year. Next, create your vision for the coming year. Where do you want to be? Do you want to be in better physical health? Better financial health or spend more time with your family?

It is important to take a holistic approach to planning because it will require the best version of "you" to generate the optimal results. What is your income target for 2015? Do you want to save more for retirement? Do you want to save for a special vacation?

Step 2 – Identify Opportunities

Now that you know where you want to go, it's time to evaluate the resources needed to attain those goals. It is important to clearly use tools that are readily available and perhaps need a little tweaking versus going out to search for completely new resources. Searching for new resources can be time consuming, expensive and just a diversion to generating business.

Do you have the right people resources in place? Would you benefit from a virtual assistant? Perhaps hiring a buyer's agent would be a strategic move for your business. How are you keeping in consistent contact with past clients, prospects and centers of influence? Do you have a financial advisor helping you make investment decisions? Do you have a tax advisor helping to minimize your tax bill?

Take advantage of easy marketing outlets through social media. Even if you are not tech savvy, YouTube can serve as a wonderful visual "how to" guide. Once you get the hang of it, use it to create a 30-second commercial. It doesn't have to be fancy and can be done in your office or at a listing, but this allows viewers to see and hear you. You can tell them your area of expertise, your strengths and what sets you apart from the rest. Essentially, you are your own greatest marketing tool.

Step 3 – Build Your Action Plan

You must take your projected goals and break them down into incremental weekly goals or daily goals.

Developing a specific daily plan is the key to making your projected goals a reality. It is important to develop good, consistent habits. For example, if one goal is saving for retirement, you must have a plan in place to set aside a consistent amount on a monthly basis regardless of income that month. Or, we must know that 20 percent of each commission check is electronically sent to a retirement account.

To keep your physical health a priority, you must schedule your exercise on your calendar just as you would a client appointment, leaving nothing to chance. To increase your number of property listings, you must increase prospecting hours to ensure that you have increased the number of listing appointments.

To prioritize and stay focused it is suggested that you begin each day with three personal priorities and three business priorities defined for that day.

Step 4 – Track Results

The best motivator to success is proof that you're moving in the right direction. Have your number of appointments increased? Have your website numbers improved? Has your retirement account balance increased?

There is a direct correlation between the activities that you do on a consistent basis and the results that you derive. If you wish to change your results, you must change your activities. Remember, staying busy is not a substitute for generating business. Be sure that you are extremely selective with how you choose to spend your precious time. It is a finite resource of which we do not have the luxury of creating more.

Here's to a solid business plan and a spectacular 2015!



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