



START WITH THE END IN MIND

Starting and managing a business is overwhelming, especially for the uninitiated. There always seems to be so much to do, and so little time to do it. You spend your days working very hard at getting the job done, responding to customer enquiries, making sales calls, and so on, that very soon the days blur into weeks. You forget what it was that inspired you to begin the journey in the first place.

The steps you have taken already are enormous. You have made a decision to take control of your destiny and create the life you desire. Congratulations. Now is the time to build on these first steps with a solid plan of action.

Now, there are a number of plans that you can and should use in your business. Business plans, marketing plans and financial plans are all great examples of what you should have, and what you should later refer to. However, there is a simple plan that you can do before developing any of the others just mentioned. This plan requires that you complete your ultimate goal in your mind, and work backwards.

Here's what I mean.

Take the vision or idea that you had when you decided to begin your business, or begin a new project in the company you work for. What was it that you could see as the end product? How did it look, feel, taste, sound, smell? Can you see it in your head?

Now, ask yourself this very important question. What do I need to do to have (product, idea, report, etc) completed by (chose a date)?

This is one of the most powerful questions you could ask yourself. It will get your brain working on a solution for you, even while you sleep. With respect to the date - just pick one. I once heard the expression that there are no unrealistic goals, just unrealistic timeframes. If you need a starting point, choose one year in the future.

So for example, your question might read: What do I need to do to complete my new range of herbal products by April 1st 2007?

Now comes the next part, and it may sound a little tricky. Assume you know the answer. Yep, just tell yourself that you know the answer to this, and then get it down on paper. Even use a tape recorder if you find talking about it out loud helps. By doing this you silence the nagging voice of doubt in your head, and unlock the brains creative mind to find the solutions for you. What has to happen 11 months from now for the goal to be realized? 10 months? What has to happen in 6 months time for the end result to take place?

Keep working back to 12 months before the end date - today. If you compare your plan to where you are at in reality, and there is a discrepancy, then adjust your end date. If your plan says that you need to have completed the testing to your product by the end of April 2006, and you know that it will be June before that task is completed, change the end date to be June 2007.

If you begin with the end result in mind, you will be able to have a clearer focus for your business, and develop a rough guide to help you with organizing your daily activities. From this rough guide, you can begin preparing your plans to really map out your path.

Remember - there are no wrong answers to this exercise, so have a go. You are already half way there by taking the first steps you already have.

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