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### **Your Business Plan on a page.**

Article by Andy Low

I was once asked by my MD to write my marketing and business plan for my product group on one page only (BPP). This was very challenging, forcing the mind into focusing on the important issues only in the coming year and where the most effective action was possible. All extraneous and ultimately non essential activity failed to 'make the cut'.

The process drives a focused set of objectives and strategies which leads to an action plan that is easy to follow and check against these goals.

Each key manager should write the BPP for their part of the overall corporate plan. This is their understanding of what they are personally responsible for doing. It should include the following:-

Vision and mission statement

A set of **SMART** objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time targeted)– Note here that the measures are internally generated and not imposed from outside.

Key strategies setting out how these objectives will be achieved

Action plans with dates and space to show progress reports ongoing.

### **What does this process achieve? Main benefits:-**

**Results matter.** Everyone knows what results are required and by when and these are tracked regularly. Also it is clear who is accountable for these results.

**Less paper more energy.** A short reference document such as a BPP will give everyone more time to focus on how more effective they can be in doing their job and achieving the results needed

**Flexibility.** All BPP's are in a similar format, so that any changes that need to be made can be done quickly and set out in the most distilled form possible.

**Moving in the same direction.** After the initial completion of the plans, it is easy to check how everyone's plans are aligned. This will involve working through the key objectives, strategies and actions to ensure that the company is moving in the same direction. Once done, say after 1 or 2 monthly assessment meetings, most of the major changes have happened and everyone will know what they are responsible for, what they have to do by when and how this fits with everyone else.

**Better implementation.** Progress reports are easy, as each measure is checked and due dates are listed. Problem areas are consistently highlighted so that additional resource can be focused on solutions.

**Shorter Meetings.** The BPP updates, which should take no longer than 30 minutes to update, can be circulated in advance and the meeting then focuses on action planning and implementation rather than the update process itself. Therefore 80% of the meeting can be productive action rather than administration.

**Better Communication.** The BPP's are continuously updated and circulated to all relevant people. This means that all company leaders are seeing the total information available( in an easily digested form) about the company plans. Often this total view can spark additional opportunities that might otherwise have been overlooked.

The process of doing the BPP also has an additional learning benefit for all those who participate. It compels people to think in a way that focuses on the objectives, strategies and outcomes of a plan, not just the activities- this leads to improvements in thinking and better planning.

Just think "What would the impact be on my business if everyone felt accountable for the results?"