

PLANNING & COMMUNICATION - KEYS TO SUCCESS

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Whatever you do, don't start at the beginning, plan first!

Three major components: define the company and objectives, plan for your successor and annual business plans.

1. Define company and objectives
  - Mission statement
  - 2-3 year objectives, be specific
  - Corporate philosophy, customers and employees
2. Planning for your successor
  - Organizational chart, responsibilities
  - Identify potential and current management
  - Identify logical & emergency successor
  - Develop emergency financial plan
  - Plan for surviving equity parties

Check list:

Will, Insurance policies, Buy sell agreement, Organizational plan, Spouse financial arrangement, Power of attorney, Officer to execute contracts for company, Liability protection for non-owner officer, Plans for communicating with: banks, suppliers, employees, customers, media, stockholders, Stock sale valuation method.

3. Developing an annual strategic business plan.
  - Done annually and reviewed often, must be specific.
  - Includes: financial information and projections, marketing plan, personnel requirements, inventory needs.

Communication

Three major problem areas to clear communication

1. Filters:
  - Good news trickle up theory, boss doesn't get all the information, tendency to minimize problems.
2. Downward amplification:
  - If not specific the further down the ladder an order goes it tends to increase in importance.
3. Timing:
  - Biggest problem is getting information out too late.
  - Creates crisis management.

Comprehension level depends upon importance or urgency of information.

Lateral communication must be managed.

SMCR (Sender, Message, Channel, Receiver)

Sender: What level in organization did information originate, authority, previous communication problems.

Message: Be specific, have others read first, is timing right, clear and concise.

Channel: General, written, oral, with additional information.

Receiver: Able to understand, assumptions, timing, responsibility and authority to act on information.

Must have a feed back channel for questions, suggestions, approval, exceptions.

Customer Communication

Poor job in most green industries, but is changing.  
Wantcha's verses Gotcha's

If all companies are perceived by the customers as delivering about the same service, in a similar manner and marketed the same way, then the price is the determining factor. Not the way we want it. Communication with customers can be the difference for your company.

Training needed for people, not a natural for everyone.