

TRANSFORM YOUR BUSINESS IN

BUSINESS GOING NOWHERE? FIONA CLARK WALKS YOU THROUGH THE STEPS THAT CAN TRANSFORM YOUR BUSINESS PERFORMANCE IN 2017.

ave you ever wondered why some businesses are so successful? Do you look at certain companies in awe at the way they've got it all together? And wouldn't you love to know how they did it?

I'm going to share one of the secrets to their success

It's probably not what you think. It's not some super-sophisticated system or cutting-edge dynamic software. It's something far more straightforward and you have access to it right now!

It's Business and Strategy Planning.

Before you roll your eyes, groan and think, "Oh great, it's that time of year again!" you ought to get excited about this, because amazing companies don't just hope they'll have a good year. They plan, they organise, they strategise - and they ensure they have a great year.

So why don't we all take the time to do this? Some of the reasons I've heard over the years include:

- I don't have enough time.
- I don't know where to start.

- It's just too tedious and time-consuming.
- I did it last year. I'll just tweak that plan.
- I did one seven years ago. It'll be pretty much the same.

Let me ask you a question. When did we get too busy to find a few hours to plan for the success of our businesses?

Just to put this into context, it's estimated that 50 percent of new companies fail in their first five years*. Think about that - all those organisations who closed their doors and disappeared.

For many others, it might not be as extreme as shutting up shop, but still, they may not be growing or expanding, and instead just reach a plateau or become stagnant.

WINNING WAYS

Being successful in business is not easy. It takes perseverance, drive, resilience, courage and belief. But it's also one of the most exciting, rewarding and fulfilling things you can achieve.

If you truly want to be successful however, you need to take away the hope and replace it with a clear, practical, effective growth plan to ensure you have an outstanding year.

If you're uncertain of the best way to approach this, ask for help from an expert. In fact, this is one of the most sought-after services I provide to my clients. It makes life so much easier when you have that extra level of knowledge and support.

For now, here are '5 Winning Ways' to help you plan for success in

1. Start with your mindset

Get in the right headspace. You need to be objective; step back and look at your business with fresh eyes. Try to take the emotion out of it and focus on the facts. Don't beat yourself up about what you feel isn't working. Find what is working and keep doing that! Look for gaps and ways in which you can adapt and improve. And remember to celebrate vour successes.

2. Review

It all starts here. Review what worked well in 2016.

Sales: what was your best-selling product or service? What was your 'easy sell' and what made you the most margin?

Turnover: did your turnover reflect the time and effort you spent in your business?

Drawings: did these match the hard work you put in? If you broke it down into an hourly rate, what would this be?

Marketing: where did your customers come from? If it's from referrals and word of mouth recommendations, did your referral program help to drive more clients to the business? And how have you thanked those who sent new clients your way? What was your most effective marketing strategy, and why did it work so well?

Systems: where are the bottlenecks in the business? What is slowing down growth or making it difficult for customers to buy from you? Conversely, what's running smoothly, and are you strongly positioned to handle an increase in clients this year?

3. Set your goals

Ideally, you should be setting SMART goals every year. The acronym stands for:

- · Specific.
- Measurable.
- Achievable.
- Realistic.
- Time-hound

This is a great way to define exactly what you want to achieve in the next 12 months, build accountability around it with time-scales, and to monitor and evaluate your progress.

Don't make your goals too easy. Create them to be a stretch, so that you have to work hard to make them happen, but still realistic with the time and resources you have available.

4. Break it down

Keep it simple, and chunk it down into a monthly step-by-step plan. This will make it more achievable and more doable. One popular strategy I introduce to clients is to break it down into a 90-Day Action Plan. This means that busy business owners just need to focus on the next three months at a time, and each quarter builds towards their annual plan and goals.

5. Get it done!

The last step is, quite simply, to take action and put your plan into

At this point, those who are perfectionists may suffer from "paralysis by analysis." But, you can lose out on great opportunities if you wait until everything is perfect.

As I often say to my clients: "Done is better than none!"

Having someone to keep you accountable, focused and on track can be really valuable. Knowing that you have to answer to them can go a long way to helping you get things done!

All in all, make the most of this opportunity to get inspired and be creative in your business, and remember why you started it in the first place.

Find your special place out of the office where you can just relax, get away, and think clearly about where you've come from and where you want to get to. I've found that going to the beach with a pad, pen, some good coffee and music helps me get into a positive frame of mind for the ideas to flow.

I hope I've helped to reignite your enthusiasm for planning, and reminded you of the importance to map out your year ahead.

So, will 2017 be the year that you transform your business? NZB

*MYOB NZ Business Monitor 2015



FIONA CLARK IS DIRECTOR OF BREAKTHROUGH BUSINESS SOLUTIONS - BUSINESS GROWTH SPECIALISTS FOR SMALL TO MEDIUM BUSINESSES. VISIT WWW.BUSINESSGROWTHCOACH.CO.NZ

with you.