

The 30-Day PLAN



The unpredictability of the past few years has really made business planning challenging. Now might be a good time to reevaluate your planning process.

BY MARK RICHARDSON

I woke up this morning to three inches of snow that I was not expecting and that was not predicted. My friend's father died last week while on a ski trip. He was in decent shape. A business I work with sold last month for several times what it was estimated to be worth just two years ago. I can go on and on about events and how things happen for which we/they do not have a plan.

This dynamic is frustrating to me because I am a very disciplined planner (like some of you). In business, I have coached on short, medium and long-term plans. Unfortunately, there are a lot of wasted calories on business plans in the past couple of years because there are so many curveballs or unexpected things that can happen that change the plans and can dramatically render them ineffective.

A year ago, I wrote about the 12-week year. This paradigm shift of thinking about the traditional 12-month year in four distinct mini years and planning for each was helpful to many. As this thought process has evolved, I am encouraging the following adjustments for this year, which will address the unpredictable world we live in.

ONE-YEAR VISION...

Spend some time trying to articulate a one-year vision (not a plan). This vision might include more balance, financial freedom and/or deeper connection with relationships. A vision is more of a direction than specific goals. It is like a

vision to travel to the mountains versus the shore. You may not be sure of the exact route or even which mountain range, but you can imagine breathing in the mountain air and enjoying the mountain views. Do not worry about being too specific because it is more about how you will feel than deciding exactly where you will be.

THREE-MONTH PRIORITIES AND GOALS

With the vision in mind, you want to articulate priorities and goals on a three-month cycle. A priority is what you will be spending more time on. A priority has a sense of hierarchy compared to other things. For many, it is not about abandoning what you have done in the past, but spending more time and energy on whatever the priority or goal is. For example, if better health is a priority, you will want to begin to track health related things or make sure you are blocking out time for workouts. If growth in the business is a priority, you will want to have more conversations and open doors for growth. I like to limit these to three top priorities and goals, making your success more likely.

30-DAY PLAN

Because of the uncertainty of recent years, a super strong 30-day plan today is important. Based on where you are heading (the vision) and what your priorities are, try to have a specific 30-day plan and the action steps.

Think of this like a 30-day plan for a home remodeling project that includes the visual drawing of the project, the schedule, the time estimates and the budget.

While this plan needs to be mapped out, you also need to monitor it on a daily basis. By keeping it to 30 days, you will be able to predict better than several months out. Try to be very disciplined but not obsessed. Be sure to call the appropriate audibles to make sure you are still on target with the vision and the priorities.

In closing, I know for many looking at things through a new lens (30-day versus 12-month) might be uncomfortable. You do not need to abandon the annual budgets, but do not let them be a straitjacket for the year.

If you leverage this thought process, it will achieve a more accurate and predictable outcome. At the end of the year, you will be able to look back from where you end up and feel much better and more fulfilled. ■

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