



74 Planning your strategy

What is a strategy?

Your strategy is a description of exactly how you plan to achieve each goal you have set. It is your route map to the end result you have committed to. Your strategy is how you are going to make it happen.

Why is having one important?

Setting time aside to create a strategy will ensure that you think about and plan your way forward. If you do not do this all you will have is a set of goals and no methodology.

Your challenge

Allowing yourself time to work *on* your business as opposed to *in* it is your challenge. There will always be something urgent and important to do. Strategy planning is a non-urgent but vitally important task that you must allocate the time to do. You will need to stop doing, start thinking and planning.

How to create a strategy

You will need a strategy for each of your marketing goals.

Example 1 – Build a strong profile in the Thames Valley Region

Each mini goal will need a strategy of its own and will need to be broken down into a critical path plan.

	3		6		9		12
NOW	→ months	→	months	→	months	→	months
.....							

Draw a line which represents the length of time it will take to reach the goal.

Break that time period down into suitable sections. Create a specific goal for each section of time (these are stepping stones to the final destination).

For each goal in each section you will need to check out the following:

- What needs to happen to achieve this goal?
- What is vital to achieve before you will be able to move on?
- What needs to happen by when?
- How long will things take?
- What resources do you need?
- What resources have you got?

Now plan your steps in their critical order.

Example 2 – To create the opportunity to speak at one networking event per month

- Research the different networking events in the Thames Valley.
- Check the fit with ideal target customers.
- Find out about speaking opportunities, requirements and available slots.
- Visit events as a guest.
- Short-list the best.
- Create a brief for a set of hot topics with audience appeal.
- Contact organisers with your offer.
- Plan calendar.
- Create a talk and any supporting promotional material.

This will need to be done for every one of your sales and marketing goals. When you have finished you will have your complete success strategy. It will be a lot easier to plan the days and months ahead once you know exactly what you need to do to make it happen.

YOUR STRATEGY – SPECIAL RESPONSE CHECKLIST

The following questions will help you to plan your own strategy.

- ▶ How are you going to progress each element of your plan?
- ▶ What is the critical path for each of the goals you have set?
- ▶ What are the milestones and deadlines?
- ▶ What are the steps?
- ▶ What needs setting up?
- ▶ What are the priorities?
- ▶ What specific practical actions need to be taken to make it happen?
- ▶ By whom and by when?
- ▶ How will you monitor, evaluate and review your strategy?

How to use this information

Take time out to plan your marketing strategy. Involve your team in its creation. Remember, people support that which they help to create.

Think strategy and work on your business not just in it