

Chapter 1: The SBL Bicycle

Using the analogy of a bicycle, picture you, the business owner, as the rider, and envision an SBL bike that will help you “ride” toward your vision of long-term success. SBL will create a harmonious fusion of your personal and business lives. It stops you from getting stuck cycling in circles, as too many business owners often do. For those business owners already stuck cycling in circles, the SBL process will get you off this dead-end track and onto the path that leads to fulfilling your dreams.



The SBL Front Wheel gives a clear destination of where you want to get to and the rear wheel is the business powering you towards your destination. The personal direction of the SBL Front Wheel is required to reach your desired destination. Your success in getting there, just like any bike, is dependent on the power supplied by your SBL Rear Wheel. As a business owner, your company is essential in bringing about your personal dreams.

The SBL Front Wheel: Desired Personal Long-Term Destination

It is all too common for business owners to sacrifice their personal lives to get their businesses to a level of success, only to find that they were miserable when their

businesses got there. This won't happen to you if you use SBL because you control the direction and destination of where you want your business to take you.

In the SBL process, your Personal Vision Statement reflects your long term vision of your personal success. The objective of your SBL bike ride is getting you to your vision of personal long-term success. Your Personal Vision Statement identifies the kind of future you want to be living five to 10 years down the road and it sets the destination so you can map out the best way to get there.

Your Personal Vision Statement is the front-wheel of the SBL bicycle for every business owner using SBL. Your Personal Vision is based upon *your* needs and wants if you are the sole owner of the business. If there are multiple owners of the business, your SBL Front Wheel will include a Personal Vision Statement by each of the co-owners to identify how each wants to be living in the future and the relationship each wants with the business. If these Personal Vision Statements have any key factors in conflict with one another that can impact in any way on the business, these conflicts are resolved first in order to create a unified destination for the efforts of the company.

Your unique Personal Vision Statement will give direction to your SBL bike in the sense that you will be strategically leading your company to a future that is in sync with your dreams for the life you want to be living.

The way you turn your SBL Front Wheel will determine which direction your entire bike will move in. Where do you want your SBL bike to take you? Your dreams for your long-term future include more than the material level of success that your business can bring you. For instance, what do you want to be doing at work? What are the intellectual and creative challenges you need to keep your mind stimulated and excited about your business? Who are the people you want to spend time with at work? Are factors such as prestige and image important

to you? Perhaps you would like more time away from the business during the week to spend with your family or on hobbies. Or, maybe you want more weeks a year away from business to relax and rejuvenate on vacation.

Having only a vague vision of what you want for your future can cause your bicycle to wander off course and set you seriously astray of reaching your dreams. SBL requires documenting—in writing—a well thought out destination. So, before you start pedaling, have a clear destination expressed in writing — *your Personal Vision Statement*. Having a written Personal Vision Statement helps you develop a clear path that keeps you free of detours that can slow you down.

It is best to create a written Personal Vision Statement before starting to pedal, which will, of course, start your SBL Rear Wheel, your business wheel, moving. Knowing your personal long-term idea of success will help you decide how hard and long you should be pedaling.

The SBL Rear Wheel: Your Business Supplies the Power to Reach Your Personal Dreams

The SBL Rear Wheel of your bike represents your business. The reality is that for most business owners, the income, type of work, personal pride, image and other factors that are so important to their personal success come from the success of their business. In the same way, as you pedal your SBL bike, your peddling efforts turn the SBL Rear Wheel, which creates the power to move the bike forward. The SBL Rear Wheel creates the business power to move you in the direction determined by your SBL Front Wheel – your Personal Vision Statement.

Creating the SBL Rear Wheel of your SBL bicycle has six distinct parts. You will learn about each in great detail in this book, but the following is a very brief overview of each part.

Part 1. Company Vision Statement

Your *Company Vision Statement* represents your long-term dreams for your company. This involves the aspirations you have for your company as you want it to exist in the future.

Part 2. A Look In The Mirror Part

Your company's *Look in the Mirror Statements* consist of separate written statements assessing:

- Your company's strengths
- Your company's weaknesses,
- Your company's opportunities
- Your company's threats

These statements are sometimes referred to as SWOT Statements.

Part 3. Critical Success Factor Statements

The third part in the SBL process consists of your company *Critical Success Factors* (CSFs) Statements, which reveals those factors which are most essential to your company's success. These factors show where you, the business owner, and your employees should best direct their time and energy. You will identify one of these factors as the most critical, or essential, to your company's success. That factor becomes your company's Driving Critical Success Factor, which we refer to as the DCSF.

Part 4. Company Plan Statements

Each of the Company SBL Plans you develop using the SBL process will start with a written goal which, when successful, will satisfy the company Critical Success Factor for the

specific plan. The goal identified to satisfy the DCSF is the DCSF goal to which your company should give its greatest company-wide focus and use of resources. This DCSF goal will be the pinnacle of achievement for your most important company plan. One of the most common mistakes made by business owners is to focus on too many plans for their company's infrastructure to handle, rather than company-wide focus on the Company DCSF Plan.

The larger your company, the more able it will be to work on more than one Company Plan, with each having a Goal. You will also need to develop Strategies to achieve each Company Plan Goal, Action Plans to implement the Strategies and Tactics that will make the Action Plans succeed.

Part 5. Company “Making It Happen”

“Making it Happen” includes the tools and processes that are the best fit for your company size and the makeup of your company to makes the plans succeed/happen. The smaller the company, the more you will be involved in monitoring your company results personally and doing what is needed to get results in line with projections. In Track A) size companies, you will be reviewing the results of employees responsible for the Action Plans. In Track B) and C) companies, an Operations Team that will review the progress of your SBL plans versus expectations with regularly scheduled meetings. Sometimes, even when plans are well thought-out, they need to be modified in order to succeed. Making it Happen includes identifying the tools and KPIs to be used by your company to manage the information so that timely tracking and modifications takes place.

Company “Turning The Wheel” Part:

The sixth part, “Turning the Wheel,” involves reviewing your higher level Company SBL Statements, not the Action Plans which are managed by your Operations Team, either annually or when certain specific impactful events take place that require thinking about Changing Course. There are times, for example, when you need to rethink and redefine the Critical Success Factors on which your company should be focusing.

The Power & Focus that comes from Written SBL Statements

Creating the above mentioned written SBL Statements for the Rear Wheel of your SBL bike is a crucial part of the SBL process. You do not need to feel that you have to create works of literary greatness. To the contrary, all you need is a series of clear and articulate bulleted points when you write each of your SBL Statements. TAB members have access to a TAB Web-based application which allows the easiest, most efficient way to create SBL Statements, track the results of the Action Plans and to make changes to the Action Plans. However, if you are not a TAB member and don't have access to our TAB Web-based SBL application, it is easy to create the statements via Excel spreadsheets or even Word documents. You can create and update your SBL Statements because they are nothing more than well thought out strategic points that must be kept simple, clear and concise.

Shortly after I first started coaching business owners to use SBL, I discovered that most of these business owners were so passionate about their businesses that their written statements consisted of long-winded pages upon pages of information. As a result, SBL has a guideline that your written SBL Statements should never exceed 100 words except for Action Plan Statements. Action Plan Statements may include an unlimited amount of Tactics that collectively are essential to the Action Plan being achieved.

SBL encourages expression of management's best "out-of-the-box" creative thinking as it relates to helping your business succeed. This involves tapping the advice of your employees, including internal informal strategic advisors and/or an Operations Team if you have one. Every SBL Statement draft that you have prepared is usually improved by adding another perspective. For those who are TAB Board members, your TAB Boards and TAB facilitator/coach will be additional resources for challenging and advising you on your formal written Company SBL Statements.

It's Entirely Up To You

The road to success is rarely flat. Pedaling up the hills ahead can, at times, seem daunting. However, once you get in the habit of regularly using your SBL bicycle, the hills ahead will seem far less intimidating. It will be easier to ride along the path towards your dreams of success. In fact, like most SBL users, you'll probably notice that the more you use SBL, the easier it is to handle challenges.

Although I always want to get out on a new trail and ride my bike hard, I can't do the pedaling for your SBL bicycle or steer your handle bars. That part is entirely up to you. What I can do, via this book, is give you the tools and the techniques for riding your unique SBL bike and keeping it in great shape. I can show you how to get it tuned up, greased up and ready to take off! You'll enjoy the ride as you use SBL to achieve your personal, written vision of success while leading your company on its journey to success. So let's get started with Chapter Two!