

Chapter 2 – No Excuses

Now that you've seen the benefits of SBL and how easy it is to practice strategic business leadership, hopefully you're prepared to move ahead with learning and embracing SBL. You, the business owner, are the key to making the SBL process part of your company culture and keeping it consistently moving forward. SBL will not work within your company unless it is embraced totally by you, the business owner.

We know from experience that many new TAB business owner members see the benefits of SBL and yet come up with excuses for not embracing it as part of their personal and company culture. Let's look at these eight most common excuses that business owners use when they want to put off starting SBL. I hope that you will see that none of the excuses should keep you from making SBL an integral part of your culture:

Excuse One: I Need To Focus On a Major Company Challenge Right Now

It is easy for business owners to put off starting SBL because they perpetually stay in the mode of putting out the daily company "fires". I have heard new business owners members tell me, "I can't start with SBL right now; my business is facing challenges and I need to focus on them right now." The great thing about SBL is that you identify your most critical short-term company challenges and, with the help of the SBL system, you can start immediately using SBL to develop a plan to solve those problems now.

While it is preferable that you start your SBL efforts by first creating your written Personal Vision Statement, many TAB members have started SBL by first identifying the most Critical Success Factor, the Driving Critical Success Factor (DCSF), for their company, then

developing a Company Plan to satisfy the company's DCSF. Only after they had developed a plan to satisfy their DCSF did they go back to create their written Personal Vision Statement and Company Vision Statement.

By identifying and addressing an immediate crisis, you'll find that you don't have to stay in the rut of running your business from a day-to-day perspective. SBL can help you easily break out of this mode and jump start a more efficient, profitable and *enjoyable* way of operating your businesses.

Excuse Two: I Am More “Hands-On” Than Strategic By Nature

Whereas CEOs of large, publicly-owned businesses are almost totally involved in the larger, strategic level of the businesses they work for, owners of businesses are frequently more hands on. The smaller the business, the more likely the owner is consumed with the detailed, day-to-day tactical aspects of running the company. It is almost impossible for business owners of Track A) size companies to not be involved, to some extent, in day-to-day tactical matters.

The SBL process reflects an understanding that you, the business owner, are the driving force of your business and, as such, will likely have a deep hands-on involvement in the day-to-day running of your business. Yet, in order to maximize the success of your company, it is essential that you move more of your focus away from the day-to-day aspects of operating your company. SBL gives simple-to-use methods and tools to shift your focus more to strategically leading your business without expecting you to totally get out of your tactical involvement. Regardless of your size business, using the SBL process helps you move away from constantly getting caught up in “putting out fires” and get more strategically proactive and less reactive in leading your business.

Excuse Three: I Don't Want To Be Accountable to Anyone Else

SBL does involve accountability to projected results that have been agreed upon. This is a challenge for some business owners because one of the reasons they go into business in the first place is so that they will not have to be accountable to anyone else. Business owners don't have any accountability to anyone in their businesses and rarely have any accountability to a board of directors in the way that a CEO of a publically-owned company has accountability.

On the downside, without accountability to projected results, your company is less likely to attain your vision of success for the company. Putting yourself on the line for all to see that you believe that certain results will happen will give you the extra incentive to make sure the results take place.

Excuse Four: My Company Doesn't Have the Resources to Allocate the Time

SBL will create rather than absorb employee time. SBL reduces wasted or misdirected time and helps you eliminate your employees' ineffective use of time. Instead, you will maximize your human resource investments. Implementing SBL enables your management and non-management employees to focus on what is best for your company. This results in less fragmentation of employee time and efforts into areas that are not critical to the success of your business.

You are not expected, when using SBL, to divert your "bandwidth" for employees to stop working on their day-to-day responsibilities in order to focus on strategic planning. SBL minimizes the need for you, your management or your non management employees to divert from their day-to-day responsibilities. SBL can be adapted to the human resource infrastructure

of your company, regardless of its size. The type of reviews done weekly in Track C) sized companies, for example, may be done only monthly if your business is a smaller company.

Excuse Five: I've Tried Strategic Planning and it Didn't Work

Many TAB members tried traditional, not SBL, strategic planning before joining TAB, and it didn't work for them. The reason traditional strategic planning has a history of failure when applied to privately owned businesses is because "traditional" strategic planning was developed to work well for large, publicly owned companies, not privately owned businesses like yours. In contrast, I developed SBL very intentionally to work just for privately owned businesses, which, as we all know, is operated as a different kind of animal from the way publically owned companies do.

Even though each of our TAB members is unique and come from diverse backgrounds with different experiences and planning skills, applying SBL to their businesses has been easy for them. The principles of SBL work effectively for all business owner types to use in their businesses.

Excuse Six: My Company Is Very Successful

SBL is right for your company regardless of your current level of success or lack thereof. If your company is already successful, SBL will help your company achieve its full potential. The SBL process will give you new insights into how to lead a company to achieve its full potential.

Many companies encounter major problems due to rapid growth without proper controls. These problems can be avoided if you use SBL to manage the growth. Companies experiencing very rapid growth use SBL to increase efficient use of employee time because of the protocols and controls that come about with the use of SBL. These same companies, because of SBL, eliminated employee time wasted doing activities not aligned with the goals of the company.

Excuse Seven: My Company Is Facing Tough Economic Times

If your company is facing tough economic times or is in survival mode, this is not the time to delay using SBL “until things get better.” Businesses that are struggling economically often need course changes to get through their economic struggles. The SBL process is the perfect vehicle to develop these course changes. The SBL process will give you the strategic process to make sure your company identifies the essential changes needed, and the tools to carry out those changes in most effectively. Your company needs to be most efficient in using your available resources to successfully fight through tough economic times and move past survival mode to your desired level of success.