

INTRODUCTION

It is easy for business leaders to get so caught up in the daily grind of their businesses that they are in a reactive mode, instead of standing back, assessing the situation and making decisions based upon strategic thinking. Yet, the reality is that business leaders who develop strategic plans and lead the implementation of these plans are much more likely to achieve greater business success and greater enjoyment as a business owner.

One of the biggest leadership mistakes made by business owners is to start making changes *without understanding how things got to “this point.”* By nature business owners want to go into action right away. Too often, they make changes without standing back, taking in the landscape, and only then determining what the best strategic decision is to have the greatest chance of success.

I believe in the expression, “Don’t move the fence until you know what it’s there for, and when you do move the fence, know when and where you need to move it.” When you come into a challenging business situation as the business leader, you must be very methodical and avoid knee jerk reactions.

Strategic Business Leadership® (SBL) bypasses the hit-or-miss approach being used by most business owners. SBL helps business owners organize and focus on each and every event that has to be dealt with in the ever changing world of business. SBL demystifies how to strategically lead a privately owned business. It integrates the needs business owners have to be both involved strategically with the practical reality that business owners will also often be involved tactically at every level.

Business owners using SBL no longer have to stress over those unknown curves that are thrown at them in the business world. When you use SBL in your business, you know that you are, at last, in control of your company and your company's destiny.

SBL's Proven Benefits

By using the SBL process, you will be taking the single most important step to helping your company reach its potential. The easy-to-use SBL process is a tested and proven leadership process that has, for decades, helped business owners around the world achieve greater company profits and increase the value of their businesses.

Using SBL will help you develop a clear picture of the future you desire for your company and serve as a map for how to achieve your long-term vision of success. You will gain a collective commitment from your employees on company critical success factors, goals, strategies and action plans. This will take place because your employees will share the same clear and easy-to-understand picture of the strategic direction you wish to take your company and the actions needed to get there.

SBL will help your managers make the right decisions in regards to resources, time allocation and efforts for themselves and their subordinates. It will reduce the distractions of lower priority issues. It will bring about the accountability that comes from a disciplined follow-up mechanism in which action plan results are reviewed against projected results, and modified as needed to maximize outcomes.

But the benefits of SBL are not limited to businesses. SBL has helped business owners identify their long-term dreams as business owners and how their businesses can help them attain

the lives they want to live. Using SBL has also brought about less stress and more happiness in their lives.

Utilize Elements of SBL Best For Your Size Company

SBL works for privately owned companies of all sizes and it is easy for you to use those portions of SBL that work for your particular size company. There is no privately-owned business that is too small or too big to benefit from SBL. SBL is used successfully with companies having only a few employees, but also works to bring about greater success for companies that have hundreds of employees. This book will show you how to best utilize those elements of SBL that work for the unique challenges you bring to the strategic planning table because of the limitations created by the size of your business. Companies with multiple divisions or subsidiaries with independent profit and loss responsibilities have found it easy to use SBL with each one division or subsidiary having its own set of SBL Company Plans.

In order for you to best understand how to customize your use of the SBL process in a way that works for your size company, I have included three case studies, each involving a different size company, which are tracked throughout the book:

- Track A): A small contractor, Arden Construction, with 6 employees, one of whom is a supervisor. The company, which uses subcontractors, grosses \$750,000 in annual revenue. TAB includes these size members in boards for small businesses that are typically referred to as Entrepreneur Boards.
- Track B): A Metal fabrication manufacturer, Baker Fabrication, with 2 executives reporting to the owner plus two middle level managers who report to the owner, and a total of 20 employees. The company grossed \$2.5 million in annual

revenue. TAB includes these size members in boards generally referred to as President Boards. These members are generally interested, but not willing or able to invest the time and resources, in implementing the level of the strategic planning in SBL that can be committed to by companies represented by the Track C) case study.

- Track C): A large IT consulting company, Conroy Consulting, with two brothers as owners, 5 executives, 8 non-executive level managers and a total of 50 employees, which is grossing \$20M in annual revenue. Track C) size companies typically have owners and staff that have a role in implementing the full planning process and plan management, using all the features of the SBL process.

Stories to Illustrate Points

Throughout the book, I use stories, which are typically composites of stories involving different business owners, to illustrate points I am hoping to make. These business owners, whose stories I am sharing, have been coached by either me or by TAB facilitators using the SBL process to help them strategically lead their companies. Because of confidentiality, which is so integral to the entire TAB peer board/coaching dynamics, the names of the individuals, their companies, and, in many cases, even their industries have been changed in the stories.