



Current State Assessment

“Self assessment is universal truth.” Unknown

Before being able to build a business plan with real meaning, one that will guide your daily decisions, and beginning your journey to business success you must first assess your starting point – or the “current state” of your business. The question, then, is how and what do you assess to determine where you are today?

An assessment of the starting point of your business, or its “current state,” must consider three things to put the proper context into building a business plan with real meaning...

- **Where you are today, right now, in relation to your Strategic Foundation:** This is accomplished by analyzing where you are compared to the destination and definition of business success (vision), your purpose for being (mission) and your decision making tools (values).
- **What you need to change to fully achieve your Strategic Foundation?** That is, you need to assess *what* you are currently doing and what you need to do or “**change**” in order to achieve your vision, activate on your mission and live your values.
- **What conditions exist that impact your Strategic Foundation?** This is done through an assessment of your organization’s *internal* strengths and weaknesses and the *external* opportunities and threats (a standard SWOT analysis) in relationship to your vision, mission and values.

Assessing Where You Are Today

The first part of the assessment is to determine how close or how far your business is from your newly develop Strategic Foundation; the *destination* of your business. That is, how close or far are you from having or living your vision, fully activating on your mission, and living and making decisions based on your values.

To determine this you literally, and quite simply, rate each line of the Strategic Foundation, one by one, on a scale of 1 to 10 where...

- **1 means:** NOT STARTED OR NO ACTION TAKEN. These are items where you might say... “We have not even begun to achieve this aspect of our vision,” or “We have not begun to activate on this part of our mission,” or “We do not live this value day to day.” That is, this is something you may want for your business but have really never done anything about it.
- **10 means:** COMPLETE OR CONSISTENTLY PERFORMED. These are items where you might say... “We have achieved this part of our vision right now,” “We consistently deliver on this part of our mission daily,” or “We consistently live this value every day.” A rating of 10 means you have already achieved or consistently live that aspect of your vision, mission or values.

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To assess your current state, look at each line of your business vision, your business values, and your business mission statement, and rate them on a scale of 1 to 10. Your results will likely have a mixture of ratings below 5, between 5 and 8, and a few 9's or 10's. Though you may desire all of them to be rated a 9 or 10, the fact is most businesses are not performing optimally. So, the result is not important. However, an honest assessment is so you have a true understanding of your starting point on becoming the business you desire.

Use the provided *Lead from Strength*™ Current State Assessment Template spreadsheet to document your score between 1 and 10 in the Rating column for each statement, sentence, or concept in your vision, mission and values.

Assessing Change

Now that you have assessed how close or how far you are from having the business you envisioned, it's time to determine what you need to do, need to change, or need to do differently in order to rate yourself a 9 or 10 in those areas rated lower. That is, you want to assess what needs to be different in your business in order to live or have your vision, consistently live your values, and to be fully executing on your business mission.

You will assess change for ONLY those items rated with an 8 or less. The reason you don't rate those given a 9 is because a rating of 9 is pretty darn good and you should celebrate those things you are doing well rather than look for more things to change and worry about. The focus needs to be on those items that truly need work.

To assess change for your business, ask the following for each item you rated 8 or less when you assessed your current state...

- "If I was to rate _____ (fill in the blank with an item in your Strategic Foundation) a 9 or 10, what would we have to **start** doing, right now, that we are not doing today?" In other words, what are the things the business is not currently doing that would be required to live this aspect of your Strategic Foundation? Would you need to implement new policies? Would you need to start an employee development program? Would you need to develop a new product line?
- "If I was to rate _____ (fill in the blank with an item in your Strategic Foundation) a 9 or 10, what would I have to **continue** doing that I am currently doing today?" It is likely you are doing many things that are in alignment with your Strategic Foundation already. What are they? Are you managing finances effectively? Are you acting with integrity? Are you developing talent in your organization?
- "If I was to rate _____ (fill in the blank with an item in your Strategic Foundation) a 9 or 10, what would I have to **stop** doing that I am currently doing today?" This is perhaps the most important question of the three. We are taught to consider what we are not doing and what we are doing that lead us to our objectives, but we rarely consider those things we are doing that are impeding our progress. Things that we want to consider here are: negative thoughts, bad habits, poor behaviors, or inappropriate actions and de-motivating practices, outdated ideas and inefficient processes that we are currently doing that are not in alignment with our newly defined Strategic Foundation.

Use the provided *Lead from Strength*™ Current State Assessment Template spreadsheet to document what you need to start, continue and stop doing in the appropriate column for each statement, sentence, or concept in your vision, mission and values.



Prioritizing Your Current State Assessment

Once you have rated your level of attainment of your Business Growth Foundation and then determined what you have to start, continue and stop doing, right now, to achieve it, it is time to prioritize so that we can focus our action planning.

Prioritization means more than simply one thing being more important than another. It may also imply that you have a burning desire to achieve something or that one thing must happen in order to achieve another. So when we prioritize the items in our Business Growth Foundation, we look at three concepts; the **relative importance** of each item, the **relative urgency** of each and the **relative order of accomplishment** of each. Let's look at each in more detail.

Importance

The relative importance of the items in your business vision, values and mission is, quite simply, a ranked order based on the importance they have to you. There are no right answers, only the answers that are right for you. Why they are important is not the issue, it is just what you feel is most important. This is all about your emotional attachment to that aspect of the business you are building.

To prioritize by importance: Simply go through each item in your vision, mission and values and rank order from 1 to X. You look through the list asking yourself which item is most important to you. That is number 1. You repeat the process to discover the second most important, the third and so on.

Using this method, you may find it difficult to differentiate at the top and bottom of the list. If that is the case, you might use a method similar to the one we used to rank order your values. That is, go through the list and ask which are most important and critical to you and mark those with an A. Mark those that are important, but not critical with a B. And mark those that are somewhat important with a C.

Some people have difficulty in ranking importance, so another way to think about it is to ask which of the items, if you never started or completed, would you feel most disappointed about? Again, this is about emotion, not logic. Which of the items in your Business Growth Foundation touch you emotionally or create an emotional reaction when you read them? These likely have the most "importance" to you.

Also, spend a few moments trying to understand your emotional reaction and why these items touch you emotionally. That includes clearly understanding what emotion is being elicited (fear vs. elation vs. hope vs. deep desire, etc.) and try to understand why you have an emotional reaction (you fear failing at this, you have always believed this to be your destiny, etc.).



Urgency

Similar to importance, urgency is an emotional, not a logical ranking. Urgency is about which items you feel you need to take action on now. Which do you feel that you need to wake up tomorrow morning and just get started on? It is about which make you feel most anxious to get started or get done!

To prioritize by urgency: Take your Business Growth Foundation, starting from the most to least important, and rate the urgency you have to starting or achieving it. You can use any ranking system you desire and that makes sense to you. Examples include a ranking of 1 through 5, with 1 being most urgent or using a scale such as High, Medium and Low.

Also spend a few moments to attempt to understand why you feel this urgency. Is it because you have been itching to do this all your life? Is it because somebody has told you that you can't or won't. Is it because it is what is truly what you want or is it because of some outside influence? The point here is to resist placing urgency on items when it does not come from within, when it is truly not in alignment with who you truly are. Urgency should come from burning desire, from a place of internal inspiration, desire or need, not from anger, resentment or a place outside yourself.

Order

Now that we have looked at things from an emotional standpoint, we need to look at things from a logical perspective. Putting order to the achievement of the items in your business vision, values and mission means determining which items are fundamental to the achievement of others and need to be fulfilled or acted on first in order to achieve others?

As we discussed, you may need to reach a particular financial position before activating on a new business idea. Or you may need to put a certain aspect of your values in place to gain the respect and appreciation needed to advance the business. You may also need certain training, education or certifications to fully activate on your mission.

To prioritize by order: The first thing to look at to review order is to validate our emotional desire for urgency. Look at the things you ranked high in urgency. Ask yourself if there are any other aspects of your foundation that are required to make these urgent things come about? Also ask yourself if there are pre-requisites that must be in place to achieve those things high in urgency.

Next, we assess those items we ranked as most important. Are there other aspects of your foundation that need to be in place to achieve these more important items or are there pre-requisites needed?

Creating Your Prioritized List

Once you have completed the assessment, take all the items you have listed and put them into a master, prioritized list from highest to lowest with those items that are most important, urgent and need to be done first ranked at the top. If at any point you don't know which item should be ranked higher than another, go with your gut. Go with what feels right.



SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis looks internally to determine the strengths and weaknesses of an organization and externally to look at the opportunities and threats facing the company. This assessment is done, once again, in relationship to your Strategic Foundation. That is, you honestly assess your current internal strengths and weaknesses and your external opportunities and threats, in relationship to your vision, mission and values.

Internal Assessment: To assess your organization internally, you evaluate your organization's internal structures, processes, tools, people and culture in relation to how capable you are to achieve your vision, activate your mission and live your values, as follows:

- **Strengths:** To assess your company's internal strengths, ask yourself what are you highly capable of doing in relationship to achieving the vision, activating on the mission and living your values. For example, you might be well capitalized for investment, have a highly efficient sales organization or have extremely strong customer service or a fantastic company culture.
- **Weaknesses:** To assess your company's internal weaknesses, ask yourself where you have a relatively low ability for achieving the vision, activating on the mission and living your values. For example, you might be understaffed, lack a competitive advantage or have inefficient management practices or corporate structure.

External Assessment: To assess your organization externally, you evaluate the current economic and competitive conditions that exist outside your business and *for which you have no control*, as follows:

- **Opportunities:** To assess your company's opportunities, ask yourself what economic conditions are to your advantage or what competitive situations exist for which you might take advantage. For example, lease rates may be favorable for expansion or competitors may be failing to take advantage of a market where you could gain market share.
- **Threats:** To assess your company's threats, ask yourself what economic conditions exist that are to your detriment or what competitive situations put you at risk. For example, the cost of talent may not be favorable for growth or competitors may be moving into a market where you have previously dominated.

Use the SWOT tab in the provided *Lead from Strength*™ Current State Assessment Template spreadsheet to document your organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in relation to achieving your vision, mission and values.

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