

Seven Step. Business Plan

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SHEILA
HOLM

FOREWORD BY
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To my mother and father, Irvin and Clarice Holm, for being excellent lifetime examples of remaining grounded, operating in integrity while expressing the entrepreneurial spirit in the face of any and all circumstances, and persevering through each new crisis with grace.

To my ancestors, both Norwegian and Scottish, for becoming entrepreneurs in each community, establishing businesses and community structures that stand as excellent examples of my generational legacy to this day, and for proceeding in spite of the obstacles, confirming it is okay to take risks!

To Ken Blanchard, for being a superb example of leadership, for providing a leadership program that supports people in paving their own way in business, for always keeping the planning process simple and concise, and for making mentorship an art that deeply touches millions of individuals and positively affects their lives and businesses!

To all of the people and businesses who have challenged my choices and decisions, for committing time and effort to making me become a better person in business today than I was yesterday. Thanks!

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Foreword

In *The One Minute Manager*, Spencer Johnson and I argued that the first secret to effective management is One Minute Goal Setting. All good performance starts with clear goals. If you do not know where you are going, any road will get you there.

Sheila Holm heard me deliver that message more than twenty years ago at the first meeting of the SONY Management Club in San Diego. It so affected her that she became interested in the whole area of business planning. She learned early that failing to plan results in a business actually planning to fail. That is why she wrote *Seven Step Business Plan*.

Holm offers a practical, step-by-step guide that provides every person in business—from one owner to a partnership, department, or division of a major corporation—with a one-page business plan simply by filling in the blanks. *Seven Step Business Plan* can be easily adapted for any business in any industry and it can be easily updated on a weekly or monthly basis.

As far as I am concerned, *Seven Step Business Plan* is the first and only book to provide a simple format for every business to be able to prepare and update their business plan. Enjoy this book and recognize that it can make a difference in how successful your business can be.

Remember, all good performance starts with clear goals and direction. Thanks, Sheila, for providing this to make any business more successful.

KEN BLANCHARD

Preface

Before preparing this book for you, I cycled and recycled clients to every bookstore to work through every business-planning book option. They purchased many books; however, they still wanted more help.

To make it easy and affordable for more business owners to receive help, I started conducting a series of seminars to help owners and their management teams develop their business plans within a seven-step format based upon their dreams and goals. The seminar outline rapidly developed into a seven-step, one-page form for quick and easy review while updating the business plan according to each change and adjustment to the goals.

Ownership of the business plan adds value to the bottom line of the business!

Seven Step Business Plan removes the learning-curve requirement. I know you can increase the productivity and profitability of your business when you write your own business plan. I have watched it happen, repeatedly, as clients learn these steps. You are the reason why I developed the simple “fill in the blanks” form to establish the Seven Step Business Plan.

The ability to personally adjust the business plan results in a boost to the profitability of the business. The seven-step, one-page plan remains “in view” and “up to date” with frequent input from the staff. This is one reason why the one-page format became the core element of the only

entrepreneurial program provided for the federal contract during the conversion of the defense and aerospace industry technology into commercial businesses in the late 1990s.

Their success stories, and each client story, are now past history. It is your turn to fill in the blanks with your future goals and proceed based upon your seven steps for your own Seven Step Business Plan.

So, Where Do You Begin?

The bottom line, since business owners are bottom-line thinkers: You do not have time to figure out a business-planning process or theory and then figure out how to write your thoughts into a succinct business plan. Your long-term dream, or new business idea, has been percolating for a while and by now it has finally bubbled over, causing you to purchase this book.

You and your support team can easily fill in the blanks of the Seven Step Business Plan and develop the plan together, so each member of the team will share in the ownership of the goals with everyone accountable for their participation in the business. Your plan then becomes an active part of each business planning session, and the plan can easily be updated during any meeting or whenever a member of the team sets new goals for any part of the business.

Be sure to share your successes based upon using the Seven Step Business Plan. Looking forward to the day when I will be reading your success story—soon, very soon!

Here's to you, and to your *Seven Step Business Plan* results and increased profits!

SHEILA HOLM

Introduction: Begin the Planning Process

Congratulations! You are hired. You are the best person I could find to write your business plan! With notepad and pen in hand, you are ready to begin.

Begin Writing the Plan Today, One Step at a Time

Procrastination is expensive. Avoid that step. Find a full pad of blank paper and a good pen or a stack of pens or pencils. Then, find a comfortable chair and a good place with good light to read and immediately write down the gems you think about as you continue to turn the pages.

Whether you have not yet written a plan, you have paid a consultant to write a plan, or you have proceeded with your business idea before writing a plan, you are absolutely in the majority. But the truth is that no other owner, director, or team leader can articulate your business idea better than you can. If you circled the globe and interviewed the best of the best, you would not find a single person who knows your business ideas and dreams better than you do, and they would not be able to articulate the ideas until you provided the facts. This is why I congratulate you on your decision. You have taken a positive step toward owning your business plan for your team, your division, or your company. Bravo!

Planning is the key to success and profitability.

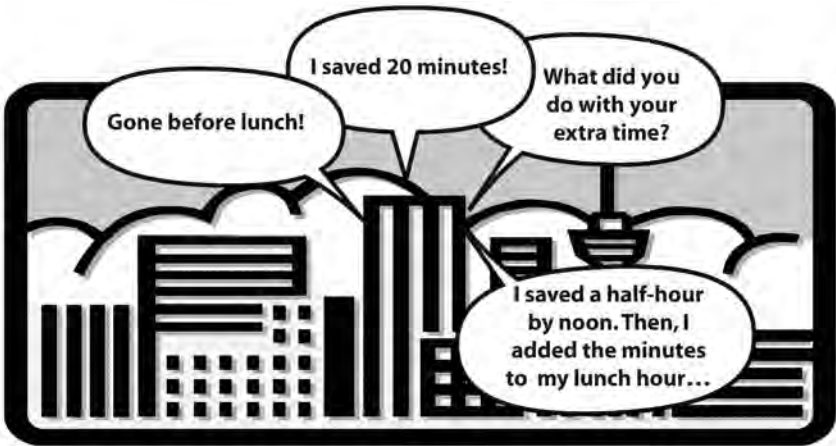
The old saying is true:

“failing to plan = planning to fail.”

How will you find the time to sit down and write? Well, there is a little secret about time. I am going to share it since you have agreed to take on the challenge of writing your business plan—Seven Step at a time.

The problem with our time and the planning process is this: we forget to set aside time to plan. If we do not find the time to plan, we will proceed without a structured plan.

To begin, we have to start from a different perspective regarding our daily calendar. When we use typical calendars, we become trained to believe the important hours are the hours on the calendar. That lie puts our lives into a spin. The spin increases in size and speed as each day passes. Is this sounding like your daily life yet? The spin is difficult to recover from until we realize we are in a spin and we have the power to stop the spin, sit down, and plan our lives, our daily time. Then, we can begin to see how we are spending our time and how we can improve upon the daily schedule and our planning processes.



Everything worth doing requires time. Every task in daily life requires time. Let's get real: even finding the time to

think about our time requires time. The good news is that every memory is created from the time we spend contributing to the task of the moment. When we contribute time toward our goals, our time expands, for we become conscious of the ways we are spending our moments. Thus we begin the contribution cycle of time—every bit of time we contribute provides us with more time to ultimately contribute to the cycle—by recognizing the gift of the “extra” time each day.

Most people do not set aside time to plan for specific goals, and that is why they have the same goals on their list the next time you talk to them. Your choice requires a shift in focus for life to be different. Focusing on your accomplishments and taking the steps required for the next phase of your business are exactly what will carry you to your next set of goals. It is a process.

To do this, start by finding time for yourself. If you are having difficulty, do not worry. This is where we all start since we have been using the “short day” calendars for so long. Over time, we have lost our place within our own schedule! It will help you to shift the focus to yourself by pretending you are meeting someone else for coffee, so go ahead and put my name on your calendar. Then take a pad of paper and this book along with you as you give yourself the time to meet with me and work on your plans. Surprise! You will not be alone. I have structured the book so that I will be with you each step of the way.

If you do not think you even have time for a cup of coffee during the week yet, arrange your planning time on Saturday for right now. Together, we will work toward your goals, making each moment count, and setting you on your way to developing your own contribution cycle of time. OK?

The Goal

Increase the planning minutes “set aside” every day of the week. Whether you start by setting aside 10 percent of the day, 2.4 hours, or you start at 5 percent and increase to 10 percent, at least start the process! As you continue to set new goals, you will fill your time with new assignments, since this process is a layered process. What is important in this very moment?

Bottom Line

Find some time to give to yourself, even if you only find twenty minutes today. As much time as you can give me today, thanks, in advance!