



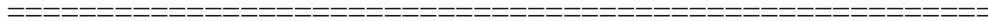
How to Succeed Online: Create Your Confident Online Business Presence in 5-Easy Steps

A Training Project for the NACWIB Training Grounds

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“The Lord says, ‘I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you’.” Psalm 32:8

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SECTION 2: Strategize

Strategize how your business idea fits into the bigger economic picture for long-term survival strategies. Narrow your ideas even further and understand why being an expert is better than being a generalist.

Here’s what you’ll cover in Section 2:

- About Your Strategic Position
- Become an Expert
- Determine Your USP
- Embrace a Long-Term Vision
- Set Strategic Goals

SECTION 2 ACTION PLAN: Focus Your Strategy



SECTION 2: Strategize

Strategize how your business idea fits into the bigger economic picture for long-term survival strategies. Narrow your ideas even further and understand why being an expert is better than being a generalist.

“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.” Ephesians 2:10

About Your Strategic Position

“Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.” Ephesians 6:7

Desiree wanted to find a business idea that included music, psychology and traveling. “I can’t give up my music and want to combine it with my other interests,” she said.

“Which area do you prefer if you had to choose?” I hoped she would pop off one top idea but instead she said, “All of them.”

After some coaching, Desiree agreed to research the idea of being a Creativity Coach with an emphasis in coaching musicians. We discussed the idea of arranging small group trips to special musical events for some clients who had the resources and interest in travel. She could add to the experience by providing an intense coaching session with attendees before or after the event.

Strategic planning concepts can help you to narrow your ideas into a feasible business. A feasible business idea must have these things:

- A target market of a significant amount of consumers who will spend money for what they want with an online business.
- A product or service that is needed in the marketplace and enhances the life of your target market in necessary ways.
- An idea that is sustainable over time and can grow, expand and diversify with the changing economy and society.

But what if you have multiple ideas that are totally different and you can’t find a way to bring them all together? You still need to base your business focus on sound, factual alternatives. The choices will be easier as you think about creating a brand new niche in the market place.



Create Something New –Yet Feasible

Creative thinking takes common ideas and combines them in innovative ways to create something new. See how your ideas fit into what society needs today and in the future. You could develop a new idea niche that the market will embrace.

I did this for one of my online businesses. I took my background in business and organization development, combined it with my experience and love for women's ministry and created the National Association of Christian Women in Business (NACWIB). This association is filling an unmet need in the market and is gaining momentum with a world-wide impact. Take a look at <http://www.nacwib.com>

Don't Dump Extra Ideas

Some ideas aren't feasible to use as a complete business. You don't have to dump these ideas. Instead, put them aside as you might want to use them later. You might use these ideas to start a group forum, teach a community class or start a blog on the topic. Over time, you might incorporate some of these ideas into your business, build them into your business expansion program or use them to create special events with your client base. Of course you might lose interest in these ideas as a business concept, determine that they can't be developed as a business, or that you want to keep the interest area for your personal enjoyment.

Here's how to organize extra ideas until you're ready for them:

- Create a file on your computer and call it something like "other topics" or "big dreams."
- Put a sub-folder for each of the topic areas you love in this main folder.
- Now in each of those folders, put all the information you come up with that relates to that topic.
- Create physical files for loose papers, notes, magazine articles, and other items that relate to each topic. Keep these close to you in your office so you know your ideas are safe.

Fill online files with web links, articles, sample websites and other materials. In the offline folders, put hard copies of web pages, magazine clippings and other physical resources. Keeping folders with your ideas will help relieve the stress of trying to remember everything and make it easy to start on another topic in the future if you want.

Become an Expert

"God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another..." 1 Peter 4:10, 11



Jennifer wanted to increase her massage therapy practice so we studied her competition to find an area of distinction. Jennifer had studied multiple forms of massage therapy and knew that a large amount of the population suffered from arthritis. This presented an opportunity to fill an unmet demand in her area.

Jennifer sent flyers to local doctors, chiropractors, health food stores and even some other massage therapists marketing herself as a specialist in massage for arthritis sufferers. As a result, something unexpected happened. Not only did Jennifer get more massage clients, but other therapists asked her to train them in massage methods for arthritic clients. By promoting herself as a specialist, Jennifer created a demand in the marketplace. Even if other massage therapists could also work with arthritis sufferers, Jennifer was able to dominate that market niche by claiming it as her specialty.

A specialist works with a tightly targeted customer market. Once you get the business from that market, you end up with other referrals. The supply and demand for what you do can shift or expand. The demand for your services as a specialist can outweigh the available supply of those specialists which makes what you offer as the specialist in higher demand.

Make Your Focus Obvious

Being a market specialist is a trend that will continue to grow. Specialists are sought after to respond to particular needs and issues in the workplace. For instance, take the area of writing. There is fiction and non-fiction writing, technical writing, SEO writing for the web, copywriting, and other specialty areas. The hiring public looks for a writer who can provide the specific type of writing they need. Of course, after winning customers, that writer could expand into additional areas if she chooses to do so, which expands her writing business.

It's difficult to distinguish one generalist from the next. A specialist automatically sticks out in a position that is unique in the crowded marketplace. As you get online, make your business focus as obvious as possible so what you do is clear to the target consumer.

Specialties and Money

Another bonus of specializing is that specialists can demand higher fees. There are several reasons for this:

- There is far less competition for the specialization that you do.
- Specialists are known experts in their field and are expected to demand more money for their services.
- They are expected to be updated with the latest information and trends to remain an expert.



- A specialist can dominate a particular area because people want to work with the “best” in the field.
- As you become more successful, you will be able to pick and choose your clientele and command the fees that your market will bear. Of course, you will also need to deliver the highest quality services in order to retain that market and build your reputation.

Be an expert in your field. Specializing is also a strategic move. It means you can go deep into one topic instead of spreading yourself too thin. That’s the way to make your mark in 21st century business.

Your Unique Selling Proposition (USP)

“Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically.” Romans 12:11

It seemed like everyone wanted to know about my experiences as a Peace Corps Volunteer in West Africa. Sharing this experience let others know some of my international business experience and work with multiple cultural groups in foreign countries. Because I wanted to continue working on a global basis, highlighting my international work experience was important. I wanted clients to have confidence in my ability to help them relate to new markets and to think globally when growing their business. This experience along with my other background gave me a unique selling proposition or USP.

The Unique Selling Position (USP)

The most distinguishing component of your business will be your unique selling position or USP. This is a term describes the one unique, identifiable difference that sets your business apart from others even if you are in a market with a lot of competition. A USP describes the benefits clients receive when they work with your business. As a result, when a potential client lines you up with a possible competitor, they will feel more confident that you know what you’re doing when you voice a strong USP.

Identify Your USP

The majority of small business people fail to develop a USP that distinguishes them from their competition. Writing your USP will help you stand out from the crowd. Here are some ways to help identify your authentic, unique selling position.

Consider your background in life. What have you done, achieved, and seen that is different, fun, unusual, and exciting? For example, say you just finished your college degree after years of raising a family. This is a difficult thing to achieve. People would be impressed and inspired by this accomplishment. But let’s go even further. Let’s say you are now a life coach who helps women return to school and create a business after raising a family. Now you have identified a



USP. It is that you have overcome particular obstacles to achieve a goal many others are interested in reaching. This is something to highlight as a part of your qualifications as a life coach. It sets you apart from the life coach who works based on theory instead of practical experience. You can honestly say that you really understand what it takes because of what you accomplished.

Another consideration in selecting a USP is to always be client focused. Address a gap that exists in the marketplace that others want to fill and show how you are uniquely qualified to fill that gap. People enjoy working with successful people and those who have unusual experiences. Your target market group should be able to relate to your USP. They should feel motivated to achieve a similar goal or find ways to benefit from using your unique qualities. Highlight unusual training, certifications, specialty areas, or other distinct qualities.

Some types of businesses make finding a USP difficult. For instance, a multi-level marketing business designed to be duplicated in specific ways are difficult to distinguish from a competitor. Other professions that might have trouble finding a USP are real estate professionals, insurance agents, or other products and service professionals with large groups of people doing the same thing.

But you can still distinguish your business by identifying a specific target market or a certain age group or people to work with. Or choose one or two products as your lead products to highlight particular aspects of the business, such as marketing to first time home buyers, or providing retirement instruments for Baby Boomers or use your personal background as a distinguishing area.

Dig for the Core

Study the websites of your competitors to find their USP. You will be inspired because few small business websites highlight a USP and most websites in the same field tend to sound the same. You will see how your USP will let you be distinct to your target market. Once you identify what makes you unique, work on your USP statement until it says exactly what you want it to. When it is clear to you it will be clear to your customers. In fact, share the USP with members of your target market to make sure it's as good as you think.

Embrace a Long-Term Vision

“For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.” Philippians 4:13

Sometimes a small business owner seems to function in a type of bubble, particularly when working at home on the Internet. But no business is immune to what is happening in the world. Open your eyes to a broader vision for your business with strategic planning.



My brief definition of strategic planning is:

Strategic planning is a way to map out the future of your business for long term success.

Two measures of strategic planning for the business person are being able to:

- Think about the present as well as the future (forecasting)
- Turn both long and short term goals into action steps (planning)

Strategic planning provides details of the steps that will keep you moving farther than point from Point A to Point B. Instead, you'll go from Point A to Point M to Point R and so on.

Strategic Questions

A part of strategic planning is to examine decisions related to long term policies, structures, goals, and objectives of the business. It includes taking time to plan growth patterns, hiring needs, and internal systems that will affect your business over the years. You will strategize the organization structure, determine the consumer base, create the vision and decide how to promote it to others with flexibility in order to make changes as needed.

Look at these questions to help you to think long-term:

- Consider what changes the economy will face currently and in the future. How will your business survive when the economy changes? Some small businesses will disappear while others will become million dollar operations during an economic crisis.
- Are you going into a highly competitive area or industry? If so, what unique aspects do you bring to the market place that will keep you going when others begin to close their doors?
- Does your business offer necessary services or products, or ones that can easily be dropped when money is tight? How can you plan for these variances by diversifying or expanding your offerings?
- What can you do to survive when the economy starts to grow? In an economic upturn, people look for new products and services. In some industries, consumers will want to purchase quickly because of having to hold off for so long. They will look for fresh inventory and innovative ideas. Will you be ready to provide these? In other industries, consumers will continue to hold on to their money for fear of the market. How will you motivate a buying decision?



- What will your business offer in a year, five years, or twenty years from now? What is your plan to be positioned to deliver these offers?
- How will your target market change, expand or shift over the coming years? Will you continue to have the same target group and grow older with them? Or will you let your target market outgrow your business while you capture new entries to your demographic groups?
- Do you have a buy-out plan? How will you transfer your thriving operation to the next generation if you want to get out and the business is thriving? What will you have to pass on to the new owner?

As you practice strategic planning, you train your mind to consider how every business move will affect your long-term goals. You'll question each decision to see how it fits into the larger business environment. Write out the responses to these questions then plan how you'll respond to them by creating goals statements.

Strategic Goals

*"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize?
Run in such a way as to get the prize." 1 Corinthians 9:24*

Goals keep you focused and motivated. Proper goal setting strategies are important to achieve long-term results. An easy way to remember how to write effective goals is to use the SMART acronym. SMART goals are:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Realistic
- Time Related

Specific goals are written out clearly and have a set time frame.

Measurable goals help you track your progress.

An **Attainable** goal is one you know you can achieve.

Realistic goals make sense.

Time Related goals provide the deadline in days.

Now that you know the process for setting SMART goals, add in these six goal-setting techniques to help you realize the attainment of your goals.



1. Make Sure You Really Want the Goal You Created

First determine what you really want in life, and then set goals to reach that point. You can always drop a goal or get an alternative.

2. Write Your Goal

If you write it, you can see it. If you can see it, it sticks in your mind. This will remind you of your goal and let your mind help to develop creative ways to reach your goal.

3. Divide Your Goal into Long and Short-Term Steps

Take your long term goal and break it up into doable steps. Each step will become a measurable short-term goal. They motivate you to plan for longer goals, which will usually take some time before achieving them in full.

4. Share Your Goals

Share your goals with people who have a similar vision as you and who will be a positive supporter of you. Sharing your goals with the right people can help you get the support you need to be successful. If you are introverted, this might be difficult for you but it is still necessary.

5. Keep Your Focus

While working on the goal stay focused and on track. As challenges arise, go back to your goals list, see where you are, acknowledge the progress you have made and get back on track.

6. Celebrate Your Achievements

When setting your goals, give yourself a motivator by having a celebration planned that you get only after reaching your goal. Your celebration can be small and personal, such as buying a small trinket or watching a new movie. Or it can involve others, like going out to a family dinner or taking a short trip. Just be sure to acknowledge you have achieved to stay refreshed. Then you can start the next phase of the goal achievement process with renewed passion.

Long Term Goals

Once you know your goals, strategize reaching your goals for the future. When you plan your growth you can take strategic steps to get where you want to go. If you know where you are going you'll get there sooner. Stay focused and consistent in moving to your strategic goals.

1. Write your goals for the first year of your business.



2. Write your goals for the third year of your business.

3. Write your goals for the fifth year of your business.

Of course you will make adjustments to these goals as you move along; but writing them gives you a start to creating your business models and lets you pay attention to what is going on in your industry. This way you will make quicker adjustments because you will be focusing on where you really want to go in the future.

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The ACTION PLAN – Be sure to do the exercises in the ACTION PLAN for Section 2.

“The Lord says, ‘I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you’.” Psalm 32:8