Your business plan is like a road map to long-term success.

Have you ever been in a situation where you didn't have a map?

To find your destination and got lost wasting precious time and

Money? Well, the same can happen to your business if you

Don’t plan out your business strategies.

**Why you need a business plan.**

It gives you a clear direction where your business is heading.

Many business owners just jump into creating a business

Without researching and making a concrete plan.

Inevitably, they soon find that they are out of money and

Have no time or clear strategies how to market their business.

Here are 8 simple steps to creating your own business plan

(This is by no means a comprehensive plan but a primer to get you

Started):

**1. Name of your business** - create a name or reevaluate the name

Of your business. Does it integrate well with what you are

Selling? Is it easy to spell and remember? Is it a name that can

Be well branded over time?

**2. Vision** - what will your business look like 5 years from now?

Think of how you may want to expand it to include other branches

Or extra employees.

**3. Mission statement** - this defines what your business really

Does, what activities it performs and what is unique about it

That stands out from your competitors.

**4. Goals and objectives** - clearly define what you want to

achieve with your business. Make sure they are quantifiable and

set to specific time lines. Set specific goals for each of your

products or services.

**5. Strengths**, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT) - by

analyzing these characteristics in your business, you will get a

clearer idea of what it will take for you to not only to survive

but also prosper.

This could include such factors as:

- your companies own changing industry

- the marketplace which may change due to social and economic conditions.

- competition which may create new threats and/or opportunities.

- new technologies which may cause you to change products or the process

in how you do things.

**Evaluating your SWOT will help you to:**

- build on your strengths

- resolve your weaknesses

- exploit opportunities

- avoid threats

Doing this analysis will help you create a more realistic

strategic action plan.

**6. Strategic action plan** - this is the most critical step of

your business plan, because without it, your business will not

get off the ground. This should include your sales and marketing

strategies.

**7. Financial plan** - a business can operate without budgets, but

it is clearly good business practice to include it. With budgets, you will be

more likely to achieve your business objectives, you will make

more-reasoned decisions and you will have better control of your

cash flow.

For any period, a cash flow statement would include:

- The cash and credit sales (or accounts receivable) expected to be

received during the period.

- The anticipated cash payments (for example, expenses for purchases,

salaries, utility charges, taxes, office expenses etc.)

- A description of other incoming and outgoing cash, with a calculation

of the overall cash balance.

This will assess how much money is on hand to meet your

financial obligations - what cash has been received and what has

been paid out. Knowledge of this cash flow cycle will help you

predict when you will receive funds and when you will be

required to make a payment.

**8. Measuring and evaluation** - you wrote your business plan and

set the goals with the intent of achieving them. So now break

them down into measurable pieces and monitor the results

regularly. A plan that cannot be measured is almost always

destined for failure. Celebrate your wins and recharge yourself

to accomplish your next goal.

Decide beforehand what constitutes a real serious loss and what

loss will be acceptable.

If you find your goals are unrealistic and unattainable, adjust

them, but realize that it takes hard work to achieve them, so

don't give up easily.

Conclusion:

Now that you have a business plan, make it a part of

you by knowing and understanding it clearly. Build upon it

continuously and refer to it often, so you remain on track to

building a profitable business.