

Planning

Planning is a vast, complex thinking ability that humans have. Planning is thinking futuristically about possible outcomes. Planning is essential in a business setting to better prepare a company for likely happenings. Planning creates the ability to be more responsive to maximize benefits and offset potential problems. Planning attempts to identify factors that may influence the future and determines the proactive responses that would best help the situation at hand.

Planning is a very dynamic process. Management never knows what will happen in the future. Planning occurs on short-term and long-term stretches through an open process that allows for change as necessary and as time passes. Realize that what really happens around you is mostly out of your control. Great ideas have to be scrapped all of the time for various reasons. Great planners are truly able to objectively see when things are not going well, and when ideas need to be rehashed. Planning processes expand organizational thinking and keep options open. Large changes in the environment that a business operates in can create the necessity to completely shift strategies. Within all planning, the authority within a business should make sure that the plans align up with the goals of the business, and are made in such a way that the business is successful at its operations.

The planning process attempts to account for immeasurable variables. It is important to consider what is possible. The actions or non-actions of competitors can sway the market share that you have in your area. Legal battles can use up lots of resources. Natural disasters and consumer spending habits require a company to reevaluate their situation. Planning is a chance game that requires a little risk, but can be the life saving process to a business. It provides the path for a business to take.

Planning is only useful if it is used. Many organizations will plan and speculate about the future and do number crunching. However, it is important to gather data and then act on it. You must interpret and draw conclusions from the data that you collect. Decide what is most likely to occur and focus on these events. Planning is all about taking action. Sitting in a meeting and drawing up budgets are not necessarily going to benefit the financial situation. They provide the framework for which actions should be based. It is important to use an active approach in reaching goals. All the time in the world can be spent planning, but it is vital to put a plan to good use and monitor progress and changes.

Basic Steps in Planning

1. Set goals: Goals can be set for various aspects of the business and can be short or long term.
2. Assess conditions: Look at what events in the past have done to effect businesses. Estimate about what outcomes will be in the future.
3. Decide how to reach goals: Have various plans that account for changes that are likely to occur.
4. Implement the plan: Put your planning to good use.
5. Monitor the plan as you implement: Are you using the plan constructively?
6. Evaluate the plan: Did the planning help accomplish business goals and was it useful?