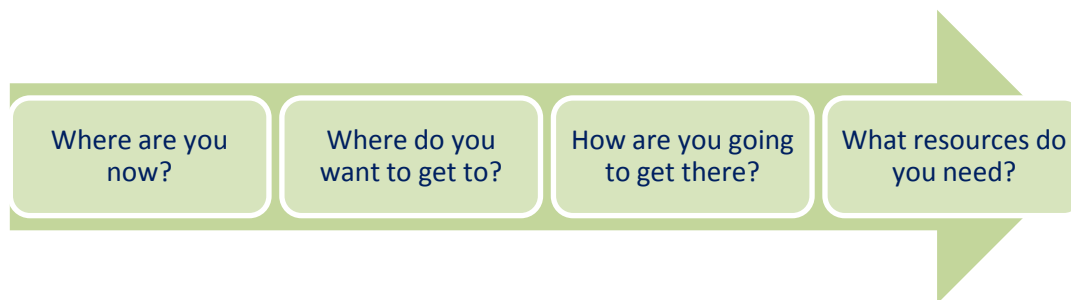


How to increase the value of your business

Gary Lowrey: *Hope is not a strategy. One needs to establish agreed policies and objectives to help determine the way forward.*

The business value audit is designed around four simple questions one needs to ask and a checklist of business attributes one should consider. A key requirement is for management to be able to articulate to all business stakeholders what they are trying to achieve, from a position of knowing where they are, and where they are trying to get to. They must be able to express how they are going to get there, and the resources they need on their journey.



It is easy to miss something, to incorrectly make an assumption, and to consider only those facts that management are aware of at any given time. There are many factors that influence decisions and a checklist of the various attributes will help ensure one has a complete picture of the business.

The checklist below has been used extensively within the technology market; it is though easy to tailor for any business sector. Its purpose is straight forward; business stakeholders need to consider all aspects of a business and the influences upon it, before they can realistically articulate a way forward in a clear, consistent and succinct way.

| PRODUCTS & SERVICES |
|---|
| Key Products/Services Overview |
| Statement of Features, Advantages and Benefits |
| Statement on Patents and IP |
| Technology Platform |
| Adherence to industry standards and any major player endorsements (e.g. IBM, Oracle Microsoft etc.) |

| |
|------------------------------------|
| Unique Value Proposition |
| Brand Value Statement & Attributes |

| |
|--|
| MARKET STRATEGY |
| Market Analysis (external focus), Market Sizes (geographies, segments) |
| SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) |
| Target Markets (sectors and geographies), Preferred Customer Profiles |
| Marketing Strategy (and plan including promotional and PR activities) |

| |
|--|
| SALES STRATEGY |
| Sales Objectives (sales values and timescales) |
| Sales Strategy & Plans (sales responsibilities defined, territories assigned, individual sales account plans and new business campaigns in place and reviewed) |
| Target Customers (benchmarked against competitors features & customer needs) |
| Sales Channels (defined objectives and plans for alliances, partnerships and influencers). |
| Reference Customers (agreed reference users) |

| |
|--|
| OPERATIONAL IMPERATIVES |
| Resources available, productive and utilised, available to deploy, surplus or required |
| Skills available, deployed and utilised, additional requirements and training needs |
| Third party dependencies, companies and contractors and associated risks |

| BUSINESS GOALS & REVENUE ANALYSIS |
|--|
| Business Goals (3-5 year time horizon, strategic and financial) |
| 5 year Revenue Analysis and Forecast (Past 2, Current and Next 2) segmented by Licences, Recurring Licences, Services related to product implementation, add-on services, less any third party sales costs, amortised R&D expenditures. |
| Exit/Payback Strategy (comparable scenarios with competitors – success criteria and benchmarks) |

Vision 2012 Power Workshop

With an understanding of where you are, where you want to get to and a checklist that will have highlighted the gaps, management can address the issues and challenges they will likely encounter on their journey. With a practical and pragmatic plan in situ, they will be doing so with a better understanding of the risks and rewards of their business goals.

External assistance from a ‘trusted advisor’ can often be useful; a round table or workshop that conducts a ‘sanity check’ on management’s ideas and thoughts will always be a useful check and balance on the company’s business plan.

The Vision 2012 Power Workshop is a short sharp appraisal of the practicalities of making the journey; it creates positive actions in a pragmatic and timely way and establishes a time horizon over which future business activities will be executed, using available resources and funds. For most businesses, it involves a few days preparatory work, a day or two in a workshop and round table with management thereafter. As a process, it has been universally successful in helping management teams navigate their journey.

About InitioStar

InitioStar provides sales and marketing services to technology and services companies. In the last decade the company has worked with 15 different technology businesses, many of whom have achieved double-digit growth and realised their stakeholder ambitions and values. The company is focused on sales and marketing, turnaround, transition and M&A in the technology and services markets. As a ‘trusted advisor’ and business partner InitioStar has built sustainable growth and value for business stakeholders and achieved profitable exits.