



7 KEY DRIVERS TO BUILDING YOUR BUSINESS

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Following a distinguished career as a Naval Engineer Officer and many years in Senior Operational Management positions, including 5 years in Small Business mentoring, Bob has chosen to use the benefit of that experience to help Small and Medium Business Owners create successful businesses.

His website <http://www.strategic-business-plan-4u.com> contains a lot of free business advice in the form of articles and links, and his eBook on Strategic Planning is the simplest available, containing an easy to follow set of worksheets and check lists, forming the basis to driving your business to the next level. This approach consolidates your effort into a single page document which is visual, easy to read and obvious to Staff and Customers alike. This is the unique feature of the Strategic Planning process outlined, and is a must to see. There is also access to extensive FREE resources with the eBook, and bonuses with each newsletter for subscribers.

HOT off the press is a NEW eBook on Skills For Business Success, 70+ pages of the skills needed to help YOU. It also comes with many FREE eBooks. Together these two eBooks provide a COMPLETE guide for Small and Medium Business Owners.

Also NEW is another eBook, "How to achieve Business Success - 101+ Questions to ask Yourself"

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INTRODUCTION

This is the next eBook in a series of "Achieving Success for Your Small or Medium Business". From visiting my website you will know that we want to make YOU successful!

My first eBook about "Making a Strategic Plan in Easy Steps and Powering Your Business to Greater Profit and Personal Freedom", was designed to turn your Business dreams into reality by following an easily workable plan.

Part of that Plan are the strategies you would adopt to achieve your Business Vision. Two later eBooks on Key Skills for Business Success, and 101+ Best Questions to ask Yourself, were directed at personal aspects of achieving Success. This latest eBook is about the 7 Key general strategies essential for any business to succeed, and contains an assessment questionnaire on Productivity, (ways of achieving more with the same resources, OR achieving the same with less resources).

It is hoped that this will be another step in your personal journey, and a huge change in driving YOUR business forward faster.

SUMMARY OF KEY DRIVERS

International research has identified seven key drivers that can improve the productivity of your business, increase your profits and give you greater personal freedom.

They are:

1. Building Leadership and Management Capability
2. Creating Productive Workplace Cultures
3. Encouraging Innovation and the Use of Technology
4. Investing in People and Skills
5. Organizing Work
6. Networking and Collaboration
7. Measuring What Matters

BUILDING LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT CAPABILITY

Effective leadership is about everyone having a clear vision of where an organization is heading. It's about identifying new opportunities and inspiring people and the teams they work in to pursue those opportunities.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD LEADER?

You are a Leader when others follow you because they want to, not because they have to.

Leaders are trusted

Leaders are effective not because they carry out the best practices competently, or have the best processes, or make a lot of phone calls. Customers will do business with people they like. They like people they can trust, and they trust people who show concern and competence. Employees will work well if they feel heard, if they clearly know what is required of them and if they feel that you understand that they are people too, and make decisions on a daily basis outside of work which affect them and their family.

Leaders listen

Listening skills are not hereditary, they are acquired. Most skills are acquired in early childhood and if children do not feel that adults are listening then it is very likely they will not listen as adults. Most people (75% according to some studies) do not listen well. People are motivated by leaders listening to them. People are more likely to follow an example than advice, so create better listeners by being a better listener. Everybody knows something that you don't, and if you listen you will find out ideas that people have for bettering the organization.

Leaders do not judge

If you criticize someone's idea they will almost certainly never use yours. Two heads are better than one and effective teamwork should always be considered an option. This means not only teaching others to work together and use each others ideas, but for you to become part of the process.

Leaders delegate

Employees' potential is often wasted. A good leader does not manage every single detail. A good leader recognizes that everyone has skills outside the immediate environment, and trusts employees to use those skills wisely.

Leaders motivate

Employees tend to stagnate when motivation decreases. Motivation is not the old fashioned "Do as I say or something bad will happen" - this is fear. That may have short term results but it is not effective longer term. Instead, challenge your employees, it initiates excitement and creativity. Set targets that may be slightly out of their range of achievement, and see what results. Then guide

them towards the solution but don't give it. Coach them into better results for you.

Leaders understand people

People in general do not change much. Look at your employees as they are now. Manage for their current abilities, not for the abilities of one outstanding individual. That individual will find his own way up. By constant observation look at what is required to do the job and become adept at interviewing and hiring.

Leaders learn

Leaders look at themselves and their actions to see if they could have done better, and remember to do it better next time. Leaders educate themselves by searching for information, reading about leadership, talking to other leaders, trading ideas and experiences, and remembering that change is constant. They keep up with all the trends in management, technical, industry and people issues. When their business has grown to employing 5-15 staff, they need to change from a manager of things to a manager of people, and from a technical expert to a strategic thinker.

Leaders plan ahead

It is not enough to come to work to just do your job, and leave at the end of the day and move on. That is what employees do, that is their contract. Leaders think about "what happens next", "what if" and have the answers and a plan of action ready. They are constantly thinking ahead, writing down ideas for improvement, and working out ways where the day to day processes work smoothly to give them more time.

Leaders have a Vision for the future of the Business

A Business Vision is the result of you imagining and deciding where your Business should be in 3-5 years time. Speak to any successful business owner and he/she will tell you exactly where the business will be in that time. They know where the business is going and what they have to do to get there. A Business Vision is the "Where", the Business Mission is "How". Having a vision is having a clear picture of what you want the future to be, and what it will hold for your business. A Business Vision will give you the drive to move your business forward, and the determination to get there.

What does a Business Vision look like?

All visions start with a dream. You need some time to let your mind wander, and your imagination to run wild. Think really big, about how the most successful business of your type should look, and write down what you come up with. There are no limits on your thoughts, look ahead 3-5 years. Your vision has to be strong enough to motivate you through those times when the daily distractions make you wonder whether it is all worth while. It has to be powerful enough to make you jump out of bed each morning and drive the business forward. It must be bold and inspire you and others who will help you achieve it. It is the dream which covers all aspects of the business as you look forward. It must be a concise summary of all your thoughts, written in a way that everyone understands it. You may be in a service industry, and

decide that when someone thinks of employing that service, you want them to contact you first. You may decide that you want to expand your range of - "To be First Choice for ...(Industry)..... Solutions".

What next?

Unless you take some action, the vision you have decided upon will remain only a dream. You have decided **where** you want your business to be, you must use that to help you decide **how** you are going to get there. In other words you need to evaluate what steps are necessary to cover each item in your Vision statement, and create a Strategic Plan to achieve those steps. Remember that the Vision must be used by you and those around you to motivate you, inspire you and spur you into action to achieve it.

CREATING PRODUCTIVE WORKPLACE CULTURES

Positive relationships between staff, teams and managers are a feature of productive workplaces. A positive work environment motivates people and helps them commit to an organization. It is vital to value people's insight, and experience - only then do they feel motivated to go the extra mile.

Expectations

People need to know what is expected of them. There needs to be agreement as to their responsibilities and outputs. From a motivational angle the question is how do we expect people to get fired up if they don't know where they are heading. Their goals must be compatible and in synchronization with the Vision and Strategic Business Plan of the unit they are working in.

Authority

People want to know, and are entitled to know, what authority they have in the organization. That is, what control over which resources they are entitled to. To achieve what is expected of them. Put another way, we can't expect people to take on responsibility if they don't have the authority to go hand in hand with it.

People want to know who they can get to help and support them when they need it. Delegation isn't abdication. There must be some built in controls as to how it is all going - people don't want to be left out on a limb.

Standards of Performance

People want to know what the specific requirements or standards of performance of their position are. They want to know what criteria are being used to judge their performance. A person wants to know if he or she is doing well, or not so well. In a word - feedback. There is no doubt that from a motivation angle feedback is the food of champions. It is only when people get feedback that they can move towards taking repetitive or corrective action. Without feedback people will not stay motivated for long. Giving feedback is often the most neglected of all the human relations aspects of a business.

Training

People expect and are entitled to get training and guidance to improve their performance. They want to work in an environment where they know their manager is concerned about them as individuals and is committed to their success. The manager can do this by respecting and using their input and ideas.

ENCOURAGING INNOVATION AND THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Innovation is key to raising workplace productivity. Productive workplaces are innovative in the way they use technology, and in their processes and operations. A company's ability to innovate depends on a range of things - the skills of employees, its workplace culture, how work is organized and a shared vision of where the business is heading.

Innovative and productive workplaces:

- encourage all staff to think of ways to create new products and improve existing services
- keep up with the play and use new technology
- plan and organize themselves well
- employ and value people with good skills and ideas.

Creating new products or services or just doing things better are vital ways of growing your business. You may be innovative on a small scale or you can introduce entirely new technology, products and services.

Having and understanding business processes is the first step in driving your business towards spectacular results.

Why are Business Processes established

In order for a business to improve its performance it must understand how it does business. It must convert the "how" into defined processes, which must be able to have their performance measured, and the results used to make subsequent improvements. They do not usually enable a person unfamiliar with a job to do that job, but they will help an employee, supervisor or manager understand and do their job better.

What are business processes?

A business process is a group of activities, which together achieve a specific goal by transforming inputs into outputs. e.g. Sales Order processing. It is often drawn, depicting tasks, roles, resources and activities to be undertaken. A business process consists of sub-processes, decisions and activities. A sub-process is a part of a higher level process which has its own goal, owner, inputs and outputs. An activity is part of the process which does not include any decision making, such as "Answer the phone", or "Produce an invoice".

How are Business Processes used?

They can be thought of as a collection of recipes in a cookbook for running a business, and reaching the objectives defined in the Strategic Plan. There are three types of business processes:

- a. Management processes - these run the business and comply with legal requirements e.g. Corporate governance
- b. Operational processes - these deliver the customer value, they are

part of the core business e.g. Deliver goods

- c. Supporting processes - these support the core processes e.g. accounting, or induction

How is a Business Process established

It is established by "mapping" what actually happens in transforming inputs into outputs, and writing it down in a form which can be used for reference, training or instruction. The international Quality standard ISO 9001 requires a company to follow a process approach when managing its business, and to this end creating process maps will assist.

Process Maps

These are the visual representation of a process. They are diagrams which show each step, and they represent the logic necessary to achieve the desired output. By mapping we can:

- a. Understand what happens and who is responsible
- b. Simplify the process as required
- c. Implement or eliminate activities
- d. Redesign and improve what happens

Business Process Management

This refers to activities performed by businesses to optimize and adapt their processes. The objective is to make the information required for measuring the performance of the business, (its Key Performance Indicators), as easy as possible to collect. The activities are grouped into 3 categories - design, execution and monitoring. Each of the activities is carried out, practically, by the use of suitable computer software, by manual collection means, or by a combination of both. The most cost efficient way will be adopted to suit the size of each business.

INVESTING IN PEOPLE AND SKILLS

In a modern economy, the skills, attitude and knowledge of people are a company's biggest asset. The more skills your staff have, the more innovative they can be, and the more they can contribute.

Skilled staff:

- are more capable with new technology
- work more quickly with fewer mistakes
- require less supervision and accept more responsibility, and
- are better communicators.

An organization's commitment to training is important for raising skills and creating a highly-skilled workforce. Effective training leads to higher skills and wages and lower staff turnover.

ATTITUDE IS ALL

A healthy attitude guarantees that the good results we all want from our life, at home, at work, and with other people, will happen. If our expectations are positive, cheerful and healthy, then we will live up to them. At the same time others will give to us by reacting to our attitude of what we expect from them. Whether we realize it or not, we establish our attitude every morning when we rise, and how we deal with our family, our colleagues, and others will be reflected in how they react to us. It is cause and effect. If we convey a positive, cheerful and healthy outlook towards other people, then that is what we will get back, and we will be the sort of people that others will want to be around. WE are responsible for our own lives. By being determined and adopting a positive attitude, smiling a lot, thinking happy thoughts, surrounding ourselves with positive people and letting the negative ones slip away, then the "environment" will respond in kind.

When YOU change, your surroundings will change. When some other person tries to give you a hard time don't let their poor attitude affect yours. Keep it good, keep it cool, and smile a lot! A great attitude gets great results, and the converse is true. Our environment, the world in which we live is completely impartial. It doesn't care who has success and who doesn't, and it doesn't care if we change or not. Our attitude to life affects US far more than it affects the world and other people in it.

Improving attitude

A healthy, positive and cheerful attitude comes about by practice, and making it a habit. Start by writing the word "Attitude" on a card, or two or three. Place them where you will see them, at home, in your car, at work. It's said that it takes 30 days to change a habit, or to develop a new one. Why not start now. Do not wait, the time will never be just right. Do it NOW. Read inspirational books and literature. Read individual's success stories, and pick out what made them succeed. Smile more, communicate and interact with people. Every successful or so called "lucky" person treats everyone else as important. Everything we have done, or want to do must be done through people. The most important person to any individual is themselves, so make them feel important, respected, recognized and loved, and they will give everything in return.

Attitude and success

Life is too short to waste our valuable time on following or copying the attitudes of others, unless they set an excellent example. Don't believe in "luck", rather say "preparedness meeting opportunity". When our attitude is positive, cheerful and healthy we put ourselves in the path of opportunities. We are able to do more in less time, because obstacles disappear. Look for the best in every situation, and for ideas to help you towards the dream of where you want to be. Act NOW as the person you want to become, radiate an attitude of confidence, security and prosperity, and you have firmly set yourself down the road to success.

ORGANIZING WORK

A well-organized workplace is able to get the best out its staff and technology. It values everyone's contribution and encourages people to share information and ideas.

Productive workplaces are flexible and they have structures and processes that enable them to adapt and grow as products, technology and markets change. They are characterized by the way they plan and communicate. Information is freely shared across teams and networks. Flexibility is a measure of the ability to respond to a change in circumstances and apply another solution to achieve the success desired.

In terms of being successful, we need to be aware of what is working, and what is not, in our journey towards our vision, dream or goal. Flexibility is the preparedness to change our approach, to find a way to do more of what is working, and maintain the desired progress to get more of what we want.

Flexibility goes hand in hand with Persistence

Persistence is an essential skill for success, but without flexibility, or on its own it is not enough. Imagine trying to shift an immovable object, sitting in your driveway, with your own strength. Every day you see it, push against it, but it won't move. Persistence alone will see you pushing for the rest of your life. Flexibility will see you reconsidering the situation, perhaps asking for help, but certainly doing something different to get the result you want!

Move away from your comfort zone

In general terms, growth and success are not achieved by always being in your comfort zone. We have comfort zones and habits in different areas of our lives - health, diet, relationships, work etc. The thought of changing can cause anxiety and fear. To move away from your comfort zone is to take a step past fear, but on the other side is what you are after - growth and success.

Be prepared for change

Even with the best laid plans, the unexpected can and probably will happen. Something outside your control can make your plans even unworkable. It is very easy to become so motivated by our vision or dream that we actually may not be aware that our plan is not working, and that we are not getting the expected results. The results (Effect) you are now receiving are the outcome of the effort (Cause) you have made in the past. It is the law of cause and effect. To get improved benefits in the future you will need to change what you are doing now. The willingness to change is the quality of flexibility.

Change is inevitable

We all realize that change is inevitable, but the real difficulty is in explaining the reasons. The natural reaction to the prospect of change is to resist, because the thought of change will take most people out of their comfort zone. They will want to know why and most importantly how it will affect them personally.

Change is not the problem

Change is not the problem, but the resistance to change is. It has been shown that employee attitude and opinion has a huge effect on productivity. The need to understand that when things change people become concerned that they will have some of their "expertness" or special position taken away from them is vital. They will have to learn a new way, and that means possibly reverting to the status of a beginner. It needs to be explained that their experience is valued, and that the changes are based upon using that experience in a positive way.

Seek assistance within the organization

The common reasons for change within an organization are to become more efficient, do more with less, or improve the profitability of the organization. It can be explained that we need to work "smarter" not harder, but the usual interpretation is that individuals will be affected, and as many of these individuals as possible need to see that the change will benefit them. You have to prove if possible, logically, with hard evidence of a well thought out plan, that the new way will be better than the old. It must be explained that the more people who can focus on making change work, the greater the chance of the change working will be. In the process those who provide assistance and support will have a greater value to the organization, they will be helping to spread change, and they will be helping to create their own future. Choose people who already have an influence with their work mates, and have good communication skills.

Managing resistance

There are many reasons that people resist change. Being prepared for the resistance, and making sure that your solutions and answers fit the culture and values within the organization are the keys to making the change successful. The new way has to make sense, and everyone must understand it, and a real need for the change has to be shown. Those responsible for implementing the change have to be trusted members of the management team, and the process has to be handled competently. People have to believe that the change will succeed and that the alternative of the status quo is not acceptable in the long term. The change must be shown as significant and not a case of papering over flaws in the existing system.

NETWORKING AND COLLABORATION

You can also improve your workplace productivity by exchanging ideas and information with others in your industry.

Networking or collaborating with others:

- reduces the cost of doing business
- provides access to new ideas and new technologies
- creates new opportunities for your business locally and internationally.

MEASURING WHAT MATTERS

It is really important to assess the value of any investment your organization makes in improving its workplace productivity.

Keeping track of this will help your organization find out the things that are making the biggest difference. A well accepted way to do this is by implementing a Performance Measurement system.

Performance Measurement is a fundamental building block of a total quality organization. Historically, organizations have always measured performance in some way through the financial performance, be this success by profit or failure by liquidation. However, traditional performance measures based on financial information alone do not provide the help towards a business's quality journey, because they do not give process performance and improvements which the customer sees. In a successful total quality business, performance will be measured by improvements across the whole business, as seen by all stakeholders.

Why measure performance?

"You cannot manage what you cannot measure"

"When you can measure what you are speaking about and express it in numbers, you know something about it"

In the cycle of continuous improvement, performance measurement plays an important role in - Identifying and tracking progress against business goals; identifying opportunities for improvement; comparing performance against both internal and external standards. Reviewing the performance of a business is also an important step when formulating the Strategic Plan. Measurement plays a key role in quality and productivity improvement activities, the main reasons being:

- To ensure Customer requirements have been met
- To be able to set sensible objectives
- To provide standards for establishing comparisons
- To provide visibility and a scorecard for people to monitor their own performance
- To highlight quality problems and determine areas for priority attention
- To provide feedback for driving the improvement effort

A simple Performance Measurement Process

A good framework will focus on the "customer" whether internal or external and measure the right things. Performance measures must be:

- Meaningful, unambiguous and widely understood
- Owned and managed by teams or individuals within the business

- Based on a high level of data integrity
- Done in a way so that data collection is embedded within the normal procedures or processes
- Able to drive improvement
- Linked to the Strategic Plan

Steps in the Process

There are four, which are continuously implemented and reviewed:

- The strategic objectives of the business are converted into desired standards of performance, or Key Performance Indicators
- Measures are developed to compare the desired performance with the actual performance
- Gaps or variations are identified
- Improvement action is initiated

A business needs to evolve its own set of measures, using any existing ones as a starting point in understanding current performance. Consider the use of the Balanced Scorecard, as described below. To ensure that the measures kick start the improvement cycle, they should be in the following main areas:

- Effectiveness, or Actual output divided by Expected output
- Efficiency, or Resources actually used divided by resources planned to be used
- Productivity, or outputs divided by inputs

A data collection/reporting system

Key elements are:

- Set up a data collection system
- Agree method for establishing current performance
- Identify possible sources of benchmark data
- Decide how often measure is reported
- Establish measure owner

Implementation

The measures, targets, improvement initiatives and a plan with timescales and designated owners should be represented as part of the Strategic Plan, and cascaded down through the business so that everyone is aware of the requirements, both from a company and individual point of view.

The critical elements of a good performance measurement system are:

- Leadership and commitment
- Good planning and a sound implementation strategy
- Appropriate employee involvement
- Simple measurement and evaluation
- Control and improvement initiatives

The Balanced Scorecard

The Balanced Scorecard is a strategic management system that when used as part of a Strategic Plan forces managers to focus on the important performance metrics that drive success. It balances a financial perspective with customer, internal process, and learning & growth perspectives.

The overall system consists of four processes:

1. Translating the vision into operational goals;
2. Communicating the vision and linking it to individual performance;
3. Strategic planning;
4. Feedback and learning and adjusting the strategy accordingly.

The scorecard seeks to measure a business from the following perspectives:

Financial perspective - measures reflecting financial performance, for example number of debtors, cash flow or return on investment. The financial performance of an

organization is fundamental to its success. **Financial figures suffer from one major drawback in that they are historical.** Whilst they tell us what has happened to the organization, it may not tell us what is currently happening. Nor is it a good indicator of future performance.

Customer perspective - measures having a direct impact on customers, for example time taken to process a phone call, results of customer surveys, number of complaints or competitive rankings.

Business process perspective - measures reflecting the performance of key business processes, for example the time spent prospecting, number of units that required rework or process cost.

Learning and growth perspective - measures describing the company's learning curve -- for example, number of employee suggestions or total hours spent on staff training.

The specific measures within each of the perspectives will be chosen to reflect the drivers of the particular business. The method can facilitate the separation of strategic policymaking from the implementation, so that organizational goals can be broken into task oriented objectives which can be managed by front-line staff.

It can also help detect correlation between activities. For example, we might find that the internal business objective of implementing a new telephone system can help the customer objective of reducing response time to telephone calls, leading to increased sales from repeat business.

In many senses, the objectives chosen are leading indicators of future performance. Effort we make today is reflected in the future profits of the company. In this way, current expenditure can be viewed as an investment in the future of the company.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are financial or non-financial measurements used to quantify progress towards strategic objectives set as part of a Strategic Plan using the Balanced Scorecard. They will differ depending upon the nature of the business and its strategic objectives, especially those involving difficult to quantify activities.

How are Key Performance Indicators used?

Monitoring business activity and performance in real time uses KPIs as part of a measurable strategic objective, which is in turn made up of a direction, the KPI, a benchmark, a target, and a timeframe. For example, a strategic objective such as: "Increase Gross Margin to 30% by the Year End 2009". In this case "Gross Margin" is the Key Performance Indicator.

Identifying Key Performance Indicators

When looking at overall business activity the "Gross Margin" KPI above is easy to identify. Making a Strategic Business Plan using the Balanced Scorecard technique it is necessary for the business to identify KPIs which may be non-financial as well. The key points for identifying suitable ones are:

- a. They must represent a defined business process
- b. The process must have clear goals or performance requirements
- c. There must be a quantitative/qualitative measurement of the results, and comparison with the goals or performance requirements
- d. There must be a procedure for investigating variances and changing processes to achieve the goals

Between 11 and 15 KPIs are sufficient for this monitoring purpose.

Examples of Key Performance Indicators

Using the four perspectives of the Balanced Scorecard, examples of KPIs are:

- a. Financial Perspective - Gross Margin, Overheads, New Business, Debtors
- b. Customer Perspective - On time contracted delivery, complaints, Customer Survey index, New customers acquired, Percentage of repeat business
- c. Internal Processes Perspective - Rework, Labour utilization, Lost time injuries, Overtime
- d. Learning and Growth Perspective - Employee satisfaction index, Number of trained deputies, Closing of skills gap, Number of cross functional teams

These are just a few of the possibilities, but by carefully selecting the KPIs, and concentrating management effort on the objectives they measure, the

progress and health of a business can be easily established. See also other suggestions contained in the Workplace Productivity Assessment.

WORKPLACE PRODUCTIVITY ASSESSMENT

Workplace productivity initiatives can bring enormous benefits for any organization. They help to create the sort of environment where people work well as a team and new ideas can flourish. People feel more motivated and valued which helps organizations to recruit and retain skilled staff. Over time, workplace productivity initiatives also boost the bottom line and create wealth and opportunities which benefit everyone. Many small and medium businesses are already experiencing this.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

This self-assessment workplace productivity tool is designed for the owners and managers of small-to-medium businesses. It is not designed to provide you with a scientific analysis of your business's performance but it may get you thinking about areas in which you can make improvements in your business practice. This tool may be modified to suit the needs of your organization and employees.

WORKPLACE PRODUCTIVITY QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is designed to help you assess how productive your workplace is. It also includes ideas on how your organization can improve its workplace productivity.

It will give you a snapshot of how efficiently your business is currently managed and how well it uses its staff and resources. It also looks at how your workplace is organized and how your workplace culture impacts on the overall productivity of your business.

Depending on your business, some of the questions may not be relevant to your situation. Just answer the ones which apply to your job or organization. You may wish to distribute this survey to other managers and employees within your business to get their views. Workplace productivity is about discussing all the ways that your organization could be working smarter, so this tool can be a great starting point for any team discussion.

With this simple tool you can assess how your organization is performing against the 7 KEY DRIVERS.

RATING: TO RECORD THE RESULTS, CALCULATE YOUR POINTS FOR EACH QUESTION IN EACH SECTION, AND PUT THE RESULTS IN THE SCORING SHEET.

Always	5
Sometimes	4
Hardly Ever	3
Not at all	2
Don't know	1
Total for each section	25

AS YOU WORK THROUGH THE QUESTIONNAIRE AND FIND ITEMS FOR FURTHER ACTION, ADD THEM TO THE **ACTION PLAN** FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION.

1. Building Leadership and Management Capability

1. Does our workplace encourage leadership at every level of our organization?

ALWAYS SOMETIMES HARDLY EVER NOT AT ALL DON'T KNOW

2. Does our organization do succession planning for all jobs so there are clear career paths for staff?

ALWAYS SOME VERY LITTLE NOT AT ALL DON'T KNOW

3. Do our managers lead by example and create a positive and productive work environment?

ALWAYS SOMETIMES HARDLY EVER NOT AT ALL DON'T KNOW

1.4. Does our organization invest in development and training for its managers?

ALWAYS SOMETIMES HARDLY EVER NOT AT ALL DON'T
KNOW

5. Does our workplace support innovative thinking and make use of new ideas?

ALWAYS SOMETIMES HARDLY NOT AT ALL DON'T KNOW DON'T KNOW
EVER

What to Measure?

Here are some things your business could keep track of:

- The percentage of your wage and salary bill spent on leadership and management training;
- The percentage number of total vacancies filled by internal appointments;
- Key indicators from employee feedback surveys.

2. Creating Productive Workplace Cultures

2.1. Do people in our workplace treat each other well and value each others' ideas?

ALWAYS SOMETIMES HARDLY EVER NEVER DON'T KNOW

2.2. Do our staff share the same goals and values?

ALWAYS SOMETIMES HARDLY EVER NEVER DON'T KNOW

2.3. Does everyone in our organization get the chance to suggest how they could improve their part of the business?

ALWAYS SOMETIMES HARDLY EVER NONE DON'T KNOW

2.4. Does our organization reward people for participating and suggesting good ideas?

ALWAYS SOMETIMES HARDLY EVER NEVER DON'T KNOW

2.5. Does our workplace gather feedback from staff on our work environment and any ideas staff have for improving it?

ALWAYS SOMETIMES HARDLY EVER NEVER DON'T KNOW

What to Measure?

Indicators for your business to keep track of could include:

- Staff turnover rates
- The amount of sick leave taken
- The time lost through workplace injuries
- Employee feedback.

Surveys of staff satisfaction can be quickly designed, circulated and analyzed. Templates are easily available from internet sites. Such a survey might include questions on employee knowledge of job roles, of organizational direction, and their perception of working relationships, and their own empowerment.

3. Encouraging Innovation and the Use of Technology

3.1 Does our organization invest in research and the development of new ideas, products or services?

ALWAYS SOMETIMES HARDLY EVER NOT AT ALL DON'T KNOW

3.2 Are staff asked about what new technology could be useful to introduce into our organization?

ALWAYS SOMETIMES HARDLY EVER NOT AT ALL DON'T KNOW

3.3 Do staff receive training when new technology is introduced?

FULL TRAINING	SOME TRAINING	LITTLE TRAINING	NOT AT ALL	DON'T KNOW
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3.4 Is our workplace open to new ideas and doing things differently?

ALWAYS SOMETIMES HARDLY EVER NOT AT ALL DON'T KNOW

3.5 Are there opportunities for staff to suggest new ideas or processes?

ALWAYS SOMETIMES HARDLY EVER NOT AT ALL DON'T KNOW

What to Measure?

Indicators for your business to keep track of could include:

- The amount of money invested in research and development
- The staff time allocated to internet/other research
- The staff time spent on training related to new technology.

5. Organizing Work

5.1 Do staff understand their role in helping our organization achieve its goals?

ALL DO SOME DO A FEW DO NO EMPLOYEES DO DON'T KNOW

5.2 Does our workplace recognize and reward people whose efforts support our firm's goals?

YES - FOR ALL	YES - FOR SOME	FOR A FEW	NOT AT ALL	DON'T KNOW
---------------	----------------	-----------	------------	------------

5.3 Does our workplace regularly analyze work processes and work flows?

ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	HARDLY EVER	NOT AT ALL	DON'T KNOW
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5.4 Does our organization encourage staff to suggest ways to improve our products, services or the way we work?

ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	HARDLY EVER	NEVER	DON'T KNOW
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5.5 Do staff regularly share information between teams, and work areas?

ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	HARDLY EVER	NOT AT ALL	DON'T KNOW
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What to Measure?

Indicators for your business to keep track of could include:

- The costs of product defects, rejects or re-working
- The costs of inspections or quality tests
- The time spent on customer complaints
- The down-time.

6. Networking and Collaboration

6.1. Is our organization well linked to other people and organizations in our industry or sector (i.e. local or national organizations)?

YES, THERE ARE STRONG LINKS THERE ARE SOME LINKS THERE ARE VERY FEW LINKS THERE ARE NO LINKS DON'T KNOW

6.2. Has our organization explored opportunities for working with or entering into joint ventures with others?

YES - A LOT	YES - SOME	ONCE	NOT AT ALL	DON'T KNOW
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6.3. How would you describe our organization's relationship with its suppliers?

EXCELLENT	GOOD	ADEQUATE	POOR	DON'T KNOW
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6.4. How would you describe our organization's relationship with other people or organizations it works with regularly (e.g. designers, distributors, wholesalers)?

EXCELLENT GOOD ADEQUATE POOR DON'T KNOW

6.5. Is our organization connected with any local, regional or national government agencies or programmes)?

YES - A LOT YES - SOME YES - VERY FEW NONE DON'T KNOW

What to Measure?

Indicators for your business to keep track of could include:

- The quality of relationships with suppliers and related businesses
- The quality of internal relationships between teams/departments.

7. Measuring What Matters

7.1. Is our organization able to collect the information it needs, to assess how well it is doing?

ALWAYS SOMETIMES HARDLY EVER NOT AT ALL DON'T KNOW

7.2. Does our organization regularly measure a range of key performance indicators that go beyond just financial performance?

ALWAYS SOMETIMES HARDLY EVER NOT AT ALL DON'T KNOW

7.3. Does everyone know what our organization's key performance indicators are?

ALL DO SOME DO A FEW DO NONE DO DON'T KNOW

7.4. Does our organization measure or monitor customer satisfaction, employee morale and supplier feedback?

ALWAYS SOMETIMES HARDLY EVER NOT AT ALL DON'T KNOW

7.5. Do we benchmark our operation against industry best practice?

ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	HARDLY EVER	NOT AT ALL	DON'T KNOW
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What to Measure?

A range of simple indicators to measure your business workplace productivity have been given in the preceding pages. However, only you can identify the appropriate key indicators for your business. Always look for indicators that:

- reflect the goals of your business as represented in the Strategic Plan.
- are critical to its success
- are measurable and comparable
- reflect 'soft' measures, such as quality of relationships, as well as hard measures.

ACTION PLAN

Good Action Plans:

- are simple and straightforward
- contain items that can be implemented at work, with or without support or any resources that might be available
- contain comments on the methods to be used, the resource required and the timings: start, finish times or dates, for all the action items (use 'SMART' - Specific , Measurable, Agreed, Realistic, Time- bound)

Finally, action plans should be achievable in a work context. Action plans should not contain more items than the company can handle without undue delay or without creating problems at work. If the action list appears to be too complex or long, items should be scheduled for progressive introduction, when prior items have been completed.

ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Complete the template below for each item/all items included on the action plan:

1. What productivity action do you intend implementing?
2. How will you involve staff in the planning and implementation of these actions?
3. What barriers might impede your implementation?
4. How will you avoid or overcome these barriers?
5. When do you intend to start implementing the action?
6. By when do you intend to complete the implementation of the action?
7. What resources (people, equipment, extra skills, etc?)Will you need to successfully implement the action?
8. What benefits do you hope will result from your actions (including financials if possible to assess)?
9. Commitment: when will you and your managers/staff meet?
 - a) To discuss the implementation of your plan; and
 - b) To review the progress of this action?
10. By which targets will you measure progress? What other indicators of success will be relevant?
11. How will you communicate this success to staff and how can you build on this success through further initiatives?

SCORING TEMPLATE

Question	Response 1	Response 2	Response 3	Response 4	Average
1.1					
1.2					
1.3					
1.4					
1.5					
2.1					
2.2					
2.3					
2.4					
2.5					
3.1					
3.2					
3.3					
3.4					
3.5					
4.1					
4.2					
4.3					
4.4					
4.5					
5.1					
5.2					
5.3					
5.4					
5.5					
6.1					
6.2					
6.3					
6.4					
6.5					
7.1					
7.2					
7.3					
7.4					
7.5					