**The Train Runs on Time: 40 thoughts for growing a sustainable business**

***By Ted Reynolds***

1. **Get a Business Coach** – join TAB or a similar affiliation.
2. **Develop a written mission for the business**. Put it in writing in an obvious place.
3. **Write an elevator pitch for the business**, one that your customers and staff will identify with.
4. **Learn “Mastering the Rockefeller Habits”** – take their course and implement it. NO exceptions. Run your huddle at the same designated time - forever!
5. **Run everything by metrics**. They are either measured as time or quantity. EVERY employee must have them and report them.
6. **Have every employee write their own job description, elevator pitch and their own metrics**. All you have to do is agree with them. Review/renew these annually and make sure every new employee is taught this as part of your culture.
7. **Meet with every employee for 10 minutes** between the 1st - 5th day of each month to review metrics and any “stuck” issues.
8. The owner MUST write his own job description, elevator pitch and job description, then **share them with the entire staff. Engage them in every way you can**.
9. **Build a dashboard that measures EVERY metric**. Assign this monthly duty to someone else. Do not maintain any reports yourself. Delegate all you can. Measure everything, but have the staff do it. You just need to agree to it.
10. That which is measured delivers good results. **That which is measured and reported delivers predictable, desired results**.
11. **Don’t schedule meetings if there is not an obvious agenda**.
12. **The train runs on time** – set dates, deadlines and insist on them being met.
13. **Start writing the business plan in early summer** – continue tweaking it throughout the summer until it’s ready.
14. **Complete the business plan by September – have your staff practice it for several months before going live**. Plan to attain your goal by practicing and fine-tuning.
15. **Renew job descriptions and elevator pitches in October**. Remember, your staff writes them, not the owner.
16. **Compensation plans for all staff are negotiated in November**. Put them in writing, be constructive and do not be afraid to be critical.
17. **December is “time out”** for family, holiday celebrations, etc.
18. **Build a marketing plan and a budget. Spend it!** It’s part of your annual business plan and should generate new business for you.
19. **Market internally to your staff**, all the time.
20. **Learn why employees generally leave** their employer.
	1. Not a fit
	2. Don’t get along with their boss or coworkers
	3. Need to make more money
21. **Learn what generally motivates employees** – M.A.P.
	1. Mastery
	2. Autonomy
	3. Purpose
22. **Develop strong financial incentives** for your entire staff.
23. **Provide a 401K retirement plan and health insurance benefits**, even if it’s a health reimbursement allowance.
24. **Figure out how to give your staff balance** in their lives. Error on their side.
25. **Encourage donating to charities** from the company and for all employees.
26. **Encourage brainstorming from all departments** in all facets of the business. When brainstorming, you can say “Yes AND” – you cannot say “Yes BUT.”
27. **Don’t be afraid to try new ideas** until something sticks.
28. **It’s ok to be stuck**; encourage a culture to raise your hand and ask for help so you can more efficiently identify what’s not working.
29. **Learn what “normal” is** in your business and within your industry. Once you understand what normal is you can “put gas on it.”
30. Keep your “par performances.” **Expect to hire overachievers**.
31. **Be quick to fire, slow to hire**.
32. **Delegate all you can**.
33. **Take time off often**.
34. **Be willing to grow slowly** – fast usually isn’t worth it.
35. Focus on your market niche– **do one thing really well**.
36. **Business accelerates when you know the truth and can trust the process**. The opposite is deceleration and bureaucracy. Every business plan needs to incorporate the words “trust” and “truth” into the written plan.
37. You do not need to invent anything to be a successful business owner. **You must know how to execute.**
38. Short decision making is simple. **Trust your gut – it’s almost always right**.

39. **Your mission: Stay in Business!**

40. **Write a Business Continuity (Disaster) Plan**. Better yet, have your #2 write it first.

**Bonus:** Embrace Technology and hire the younger generations to enable change.

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