

In this heavily rewritten chapter the author's original document is in black; my changes are in red. The completed chapter follows this version.

Chapter 9 Laying the foundation: ~~Writing the business plan~~**Planning, creating, networking**

You have already avoided the pitfalls of many new business owners – failing to conduct market research and identify the programs ~~you want to offer based on your market research data.~~**you're going to offer accordingly.** Congratulations! Now you need to avoid one other pitfall that many people fall into: jumping into business without a **clearly developed, detailed** business plan. The savvy nuns at the Catholic ~~C~~college where I used to work liked to say, -“Plan the work and work the plan.”:

~~Like market research, people~~**People** avoid creating business and financial plans because, ~~like market research, these necessary business activities are~~**it's** foreign to them. ~~Fledgling business owners, inspired by their vision, want to~~**They'd rather** get on with the process of starting a business; but when they move too quickly, they often make fatal mistakes. Harold, for example, hired an administrative assistant and leased 2,000 square feet of office space. He wanted to work with court-referred clients but he also hoped to see self referred individuals, so he took out \$500 a month of ~~splashy~~ newspaper advertising. He worked hard, but by the end of the year, he still only had 20 clients. He was losing almost \$1500 per month. ~~Harold was a nice guy, but you don't want to be like him.~~**Because he lacked a business plan, Harold's willingness to work hard and his skills as a therapist were irrelevant to the success of his business.**

Some people do their research ~~but resist making critical business decisions based on what their research tells them.~~**and still don't plan from it.** Nicole, a social worker, – was more disciplined than Harold, but she didn't bite the bullet. She dutifully conducted her market research and learned, among other things, that Marion County to the north was just starting a Drug Court. She met with ~~a couple~~**three** of the probation officers in the process of doing her market research, and they encouraged her to visit their court review sessions. She wrote a thorough business plan including financial projections that told her she ought to open a practice in Marion, the county seat. ~~Although Nicole clearly understood the ramifications of her market research, she decided against opening an office in Marion because it meant a 60-mile roundtrip drive for her each day. She reasoned that she might as well spend the time working closer to home than on the highway, so she chose to work in the counties that were closer to her. Though she knew she should do it, she decided against it because it meant a thirty-mile drive for her each day. She chose to work with counties that she felt more comfortable with because were closer to her.~~**Nicole's ship was there but she didn't stretch herself in order** meet it. She ignored her research and ~~decided to do what was easier instead by rejecting the commute.~~**followed her fears instead.** To this day, ~~her practice remains underdeveloped.~~**she has a fledging practice.**

In contrast to Nicole, who ~~followed her fears and~~ took the easier ~~—and shorter!~~**—path** path, you want to pursue the path that may be more difficult but in the long run will promise you more return.

WRITING THE BUSINESS PLAN

The first step in building a business is writing a business plan. So, it's time to roll up your sleeves, sharpen your pencil, and get to work. For some people, this part of the process will be interesting and **challenging.** ~~But for many of us, writing a business plan can be a little intimidating because we have to make ourselves articulate aspects of our proposed business that we probably haven't given much thought to.~~**fun.** ~~For most, it is painful.~~ Remember what you tell -your clients: no pain, no gain. ~~While writing your business plan may require a little extra effort on your part,~~**But I**

have created a tool to help make this process as painless as possible: **The Short-and-Snappy, It'll-Make-You-Happy Business Plan**. It is concise and practical, and once you're done, you'll love it.

The Short-and-Snappy, It'll-Make-You-Happy-Business Plan ~~provides will give you some other~~ key elements for success:

- **Credibility** – People have confidence in those who plan. ~~Your completed business plan can be used to present your services to potential referral sources; loan officers (you will need a business plan if you decide you need a loan); and your partner (if you have one) if she or he is skeptical about your venture.~~
- **Tools**—~~It's a means to present your services to potential referral sources, Bankers, your spouse (if you have one) if she or he is skeptical about your venture.~~
- **Direction and focus**—~~You can use your business plan to tell~~ ~~It tells~~ you what you're going to do and what you're *not* doing to do as you develop your business. ~~If you don't know where you're going, you are likely to arrive at an undesirable location.~~
- **Sound decision-making**—~~If you don't know where you're going, you're likely to get somewhere else.~~
- **Reality-orientation** **Focus**—~~The business plan guides you~~ ~~It helps you go~~ from the general to the specific—many of us are mildly fuzzy-headed therapists, and the plan ~~forces~~ ~~shows us~~ how to be practical and pragmatic ~~and~~ ~~us~~ to get down to earth.

The Short-and-Snappy, It'll-Make-You-Happy Business Plan

This business plan has five **sequential** parts ~~that move from the general to the specific~~: Vision, Mission, Objectives, Strategies, and Action Steps. ~~Each of these elements moves from general to more specific.~~

The **vision** is the big picture—your dream, combined with what you learned in your marketing research. The good news is that you ~~have completed most of this step in~~ ~~already done this (look back to Chapter 5).~~ You ~~can~~ simply review **your vision statement**, modify it ~~make some modifications~~ if you wish, and ~~to~~ transfer it to ~~the~~ **your** business plan.

- The **mission statement** defines your overriding purpose, listing in general terms the services you want to offer, your client base, and perhaps a summary of your philosophy of treatment.
- Your **objectives** ~~concretize~~ ~~make~~ your mission statement **concrete and detailed**. For example, if your mission statement states that you will provide treatment for court-referred offenders with the goal of helping them to avoid recidivism, your objectives might indicate that you will provide substance abuse services to forty adolescents per year who have been arrested as Minors in Possession in West River County.
- **Strategies** include general approaches to achieving your objectives. For example, one of your basic strategies might be to interact with court personnel on a weekly basis—either in person, by phone, or with reports.
- **Actions steps** are the specific and concrete activities ~~that you will use~~ ~~in which you engage~~ to meet your objectives. All the detail that you've probably wanted to include in the previous parts needs to be spelled out here. You can set deadlines for yourself, **AN EXAMPLE OR TWO OF ACTIVITY CATEGORIZATION IS NEEDED HERE** categorize activities, and make a calendar for the next several years.

Step 1: Your vision


The vision is **a** word- picture of what you want your business to look like and to do – it's your dream. It's an overview in one or two sentences that includes specific information about your services, clients, location, and employees projected three years into the future. Be passionate, be

excited, and **boldly** state what you **dream of and** desperately want to do. Particularly when you are first writing,— allow yourself to just say whatever it is you want to say. **Don't succumb to editing until you have written an entire draft of your vision. If you begin editing too soon your enthusiasm and dream will shrivel before they take shape on the page.**

The box below shows two examples of vision statements.

• *Counseling and Support Services, located in Lafayette, Indiana, provides educational and experiential treatment utilizing play, art, and music therapy for those who have suffered loss through divorce or death of a partner or other significant person and are experiencing life-transition struggles. Counseling and Support Services is staffed by one full-time therapist and one part-time receptionist-bookkeeper.*

• *New Life Inc. is a treatment facility known for its commitment to exceptional, intensive outpatient substance abuse treatment for adolescents and adults in an environment that celebrates diversity, individuality, and accountability. New Life Inc. has offices in Tacoma and Federal Way, Washington, and employs three therapists and two receptionists.*

Take a look at what you wrote in chapter 5. You **have** learned ~~much~~ a lot since then, and your thinking is **more** attuned to the realities of the business of establishing an agency. ~~clearer now.~~ Taking into account what you have learned from your market surveys and how to stake your territory, use the space below to rewrite your vision. It doesn't have to be "final draft" perfect, but it does need to be written down. **Do not omit this step!** 

Step 2: Your mission statement

Twenty or thirty years ago, very few businesses had mission statements. Today, almost every business ~~will have it~~ has a statement of purpose ~~and will make it~~ that it makes readily available to clients and customers. A mission statement demonstrates that you do, in fact, have an overriding purpose. It demonstrates that you have thought about your purpose and spent the time necessary to craft a statement that is clear and reads well. Most often, the ~~greatest~~ most effective missions statements are brief – and also memorable.


Writing a mission statement has both an internal and external purpose. Internally, ~~it~~ writing the mission statement forces you to ruminate about what you want to do and how you want to do it. ~~It~~ The completed mission statement ~~provides~~ gives you ~~a~~ with a sense of direction both now and later. Six months from now, let's suppose that a new therapist ~~approaches you about joining~~ comes to you, ~~wanting to join~~ your agency. She's interested in working with children. You look back at your mission statement and ask, "Does that fit into the plan I have for this agency?" Perhaps it does, and you welcome a new partner. Perhaps it doesn't. You say you would be willing to have this person use office space but do not feel his/her goals coincide with your mission. **Either way, the mission**

statement has given you a foundation for making the decision. Externally ~~Which~~, the mission statement also gives other people, such as probation officers, a sense of what your agency does. ~~An important perspective to remember is that the mission statement has given you a foundation for making the decision.~~

Writing your mission statement

The key to writing a strong mission statement is ~~that~~ to describe your purpose in the present tense, ~~or in other words~~ as though it's already happening. Mission statements often start with "To" which helps focus on action, ~~as the examples below demonstrate.~~

- *To teach women who use substances excessively to understand the nature and consequences of their use and to achieve sobriety and create a new way of life.*
- *To help men let go of constricting and destructive male socialization by replacing it with a new openness to other people and their own feelings through experiential individual and group counseling.*
- *To reduce recidivism and restore criminals to healthy lives by teaching them accountability, empathy, and respect through psychoeducational groups and cognitive re-orientation.*

Here's some space to write your mission. **Don't not do this!** 

Step 3: Objectives

The vision and mission statements portray the big picture but omit the specific **details** of what you want your business to achieve. Objectives include *measurable outcomes*, a term you probably remember ~~measurable outcomes~~ from writing treatment plans. For example, "The client will appear daily for breath tests **and will**, attend five **AA** meetings ~~of AA~~, and two counseling sessions per week for the next four months." Notice that the client's treatment objective contains timeframes as well as achievable and quantifiable results.

In the same way, ~~Your~~ your business objectives will outline **achievable, quantifiable goals results** that you expect your practice to meet **within specified timeframes**. To focus on objectives, ask yourself these questions:

- **What parameters will I use to** ~~How would I~~ know that my business ~~was~~ **is** successful?
- What would I want my business to look like in three years so that I felt satisfied that I'd made the **RIGHT** ~~best~~ decisions **in planning and establishing my agency?**
- What **features of my business** would people notice ~~about my business so they'd~~ **that would encourage them to** make referrals to my agency?

Objectives often include markers, **or measurable parameters, that let you know if you are meeting your objectives.** When I travel to Beaver Island by way of Charlevoix, **for example,** I know that Cadillac is exactly half-way. If I want to catch the 4:30 ferry, I'd better be out of Cadillac by 2:30. Here are some markers you might want to ~~include~~ **consider as you develop your objectives:**

- Your projections of the number of clients attending your agency on a particular date
- The percentage increase in clients each year
- The reduction in recidivism rates within your client base over a specific time period
- The amount of revenue— **from** client payments for services **and,** payments from other therapists for office space
- The **results of percentage of goals achieved**—pre- and post-tests scores for clients **and,** client satisfaction surveys.

Here are some sample objectives:-

- *To establish a referral network with 68th District Court in Poole County from which the agency receives 100 clients per year in three years*
- *To create a base of 60 new self-referred anger management clients per year in three years through yellow pages advertising, community presentations, and referrals from other therapists*
- *To create an agency staffed by an agency administrator, a part-time accountant, and four part-time therapists within three years*
- *To generate revenues of \$140,000 every year while incurring expenses of \$60,000, resulting in a yearly personal income of \$80,000 (after three years of operation).*

Set your own objectives for your agency here.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Step 4: Strategies

Your strategies spell out the tactics you'll take to achieve ~~the goals stated in your mission plan~~ **your objectives.** You'll need to develop strategies ~~to~~ **for** these **three** key areas:

1. Obtaining and keeping clients—Who are they and how will you reel them in?
2. Establishing productive ~~telling him/her~~ relationships with probation officers and other court staff **WHO WILL THE THERACOP DEAL WITH TO ANY EXTENT BESIDES THE PROBATION OFFICERS??**—Who are they? What do they want from a service- provider? What will set you apart?
3. Providing **effective** treatment ~~that's effective~~ for the population you are serving.

Here are some sample strategies:-

- *I will meet with at least one probation officer per month telling him/her about my programs and the progress of his/her clients.*
- *I will attend a workshop at least once every three months and report on what I learned either in a staff meeting or in a memo to the probation staff.*
- *I will send attendance reports once a week and narrative progress reports so the courts and referral agencies perceive that I am accountable in running my programs and know my clients.*

Use the lines below to draft at least three strategies you will use to meet your objectives.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Step 5: Action Steps

Action time. This is the last and most specific step of the five-step business plan. Your strategies drive your actions, ~~once again making the general more specific~~. They tell you what you need to do to accomplish your objectives. The examples below show precise action steps that would lead to the accomplishment of specified goals:

~~Take a look at how Eileen converted her objectives into action steps.~~

- *I call the Chamber of Commerce ~~and ask, asking~~ to give a short presentation ~~to that will explain my~~ how my adolescent treatment programs succeed where others fail.*
- *I ~~register~~ attend for the National Drug Court Institute fall Treatment Provider Training.*
- *I incorporate the Relationship History, an excellent program developed by EMERGE Inc in Boston, into my Domestic Violence Treatment Program. After becoming familiar with ~~this program~~, I explain how it works to my probation officers.*
- *I call ~~a~~ Bill S., a probation officer at the 71st District Court, to tell him ~~her~~ about particular clients ~~and~~, ~~explaining~~ why I am pleased or concerned about them.*
- *I ~~Buy~~ use QuickBooks ~~and starting using program so I can~~ track the success of various programs.*

Even though you are still creating the first draft of your Short and Snappy Business Plan, you've done enough work to let you outline several action steps. Use the lines below to sketch out the action steps you could take to execute at least two of your objectives.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Let's see how these five elements of the Short and Snappy Business Plan fit together. ~~So, putting these pieces together, let's suppose there's a woman named~~ We'll use Sylvia as an example. Sylvia worked for an agency for four years after earning her master's degree with a dual emphasis in adolescent and occupational psychology. Three years ago, she opened her own agency, ~~Metamorphosis. She's been in practice for a couple years~~ Metamorphosis concentrates on treating a range of adolescent-related problems: depression, ADHD, learning disorders, divorcing parents, anorexia, and addictions. Although Sylvia's agency is financially solvent, she feels professionally in a rut and ~~, but she's frustrated and~~ wants to see her business grow to include adult clients. There is little opportunity for expanding her practice to include occupational psychology, even on a part-time basis. However, after completing court marketing surveys for all the district, circuit, and family courts within a 50-mile radius of her office, Sylvia is confident that she will be able to expand her agency to include at least one-third court-referred clients. Here is Sylvia's first draft of her **vision statement**:

Metamorphosis, located in Alameda, California, offers diagnostic services and treatment programs for two distinct groups of clients: 1) children 10-18 years of age diagnosed with learning disorders, particularly those associated with ADHD and autism spectrum disorders, and 2) adults referred by the courts for alcohol and drug addictions and business-related crimes such as embezzlement, fraud, and larceny. Metamorphosis employs one full-time therapist, one part-time therapist, and one part-time receptionist.

Sylvia's **mission statement** reflects the dual nature of the practice she plans to build:

- *To guide adults who use alcohol and other substances addictively to understand the nature and consequences of their use and to achieve sobriety as a first step in creating a sober, rewarding, and accountable life.*
- *To foster an awareness of the human results of white-collar crime among adults convicted of embezzlement and other fraudulent business activities, with the long-term goal of establishing accountability for their actions.*
- *To increase the probability of successful academic and social interactions of teens of average to above-average intelligence who have been diagnosed with learning disabilities*

The third step in the Short and Snappy Business Plan calls for **objectives** that are achievable, quantifiable, and can be met within a specified timeframe. Sylvia's business plan uses a three-year timeframe. Her **objectives** are succinct and straightforward and are closely tied to her vision and

mission statements. Because the private practice side of Metamorphosis is fairly well established, Sylvia's objectives focus on maintaining her programs for teenagers while building her court-referred clientele. Note how Sylvia's objectives lead to strategies, and her strategies lead to actions.

- *to establish court-referred clients as one-third of the caseload (approximately 60 clients per year) at Metamorphosis*
- *to generate \$90,000 in billable hours*
- *to achieve a recidivism rate of less than 20% as measured one year after graduation with court-ordered clients*
- *to achieve and sustain positive outcomes for teenaged clients as measured by appropriate pre- and post-testing*

~~Her objectives: (1) increase court referred referrals by 50% within two years; (2) generate \$90,000 in billable hours, and (3) reduce recidivism rate to less than 20% with court-ordered clients. Sylvia created these strategies and action steps to achieve her objectives:~~

~~BELOW IN BOX?~~

The final two elements of Sylvia's Short and Snappy Business Plan, **strategies** and **action steps**, are presented below with her **objectives** to show how objectives, strategies, and action steps will work together to help Sylvia reposition Metamorphosis as an agency with both private and court-referred clients.

- Objective One: *to establish court-referred clients as one-third of the caseload (approximately 60 clients per year) at Metamorphosis*

Strategy: Position company location to be more geographically central to both clientele and probation officers

Action: Find location that is within defined territory within three months

Action: Publicize pending move to probation officers and other therapists

Action: Open relocated practice within six months

Action: Give open house to publicize business offerings and growth

Strategy: Establish relationships with Probation Officers for District Court

Action: Invite Probation Officers to see the facility and its accessibility

Action: Attend training at least two times/year to stay current and share the latest findings with probation officers

- Objective Two: *to generate \$90,000 in billable hours*

Strategy: Secure contracts with at least two District Courts as Drug Court treatment provider

Action: Develop portfolio explaining suggested programs and my qualifications to serve as Drug Court treatment provider

Action: Meet with Probation Officers at least six times per year

Strategy: Continue to market adolescent services and programs at schools and pediatricians' offices and with other therapists

Action: Write monthly newspaper article about "Living with ADD"

- **Objective Three:** *to achieve a recidivism rate of less than 20% as measured one year after graduation with court-ordered clients*

Strategy: Develop plan to measure past and present levels of recidivism

Action: Conduct literature review on research methodology

Action: Select method and present plan to court staff to gain their cooperation

Action: Present Human Subjects material to clients and enlist their participation including signing appropriate forms

Action: Implement plan

Action: Conduct, compile and present research to court staff.

- **Objective Four:** *to achieve and sustain positive outcomes for teenaged clients as measured by appropriate pre- and post-testing*

Strategy:

Action:

Action:

For additional information about writing a business plan, see the United States Small Business Administration website at www.sbaonline.sba.gov. This useful site offers detailed suggestions for writing a business plan, marketing for the small business owner, securing a loan, applicable business laws, and a wealth of relevant information for the small business owner. You can check the location of offices in your region by clicking on the map provided on the website. Local offices frequently offer low- or no-cost seminars; some training is available online.

If you have completed this chapter with thoroughness and deliberation, you have vastly increased your chances of success. If, on the other hand, you create and market your business with hasty and impulsive decisions, your future may not be so bright. Do it right. You're worth it.

After more changes, additions, and deletions, here is the revised chapter:

Chapter Nine

Laying the foundation: writing the business plan

You have already avoided the pitfalls of many new business owners—failing to conduct market research and identify the programs you want to offer based on your market research data. Congratulations! Now you need to avoid one other pitfall that many people fall into: jumping into business without a clearly developed, detailed business plan. As the savvy nuns at the Catholic college where I used to work liked to say, “Plan the work and work the plan.”

People avoid creating business and financial plans because, like market research, these necessary business activities are foreign to them. Fledgling business owners, inspired by their vision, want to get on with the process of starting a business. But when they move too quickly, they often make fatal mistakes. Harold, for example, hired an administrative assistant and leased 2,000 square feet of office space. He wanted to work with court-referred clients but he also hoped to see self-referred individuals, so he took out \$500 a month of newspaper advertising. He worked hard, but by the end of the year he still had only 20 clients. He was losing almost \$1,500 per month. Because he lacked a business plan, Harold's willingness to work hard and his skills as a therapist weren't enough to make his business succeed.

Some people do their research but resist making critical business decisions based on what their research tells them. Nicole, a social worker, was more disciplined than Harold, but she didn't bite the bullet. She dutifully conducted her market research and learned, among other things, that Marion County to the north was just starting a drug court. She met with three of the probation officers in the process of doing her market research, and they encouraged her to visit their court review sessions. She wrote a thorough business plan including financial projections that told her she ought to open a practice in Marion, the county seat.

Although Nicole clearly understood the ramifications of her market research, she decided against opening an office in Marion because it meant an 80-mile round-trip drive for her each day. She reasoned that she might as well spend the time working closer to home than on the highway, so she chose to work in the counties that were closer to her. Nicole's ship was there but she didn't stretch herself to meet it. She ignored her research and decided to do what was easier instead by rejecting the commute. To this day, her practice remains underdeveloped.

In contrast to Nicole, who took the easier—and shorter!—path, you want to pursue the path that may be more difficult but in the long run will promise you more return.

Writing the business plan

Now you can put all that you've learned about yourself and your business in a plan that will help you make good decisions. So, it's time to roll up your sleeves, sharpen your pencil, and get to work.

For some people, writing a business plan will be interesting and challenging. But for many of us, this part of the process can be a little intimidating because we have to make ourselves articulate aspects of our proposed business that we probably haven't given much thought to. Remember what you tell your clients: no pain, no gain. While writing your business plan may require a little extra effort on your part, I have created a tool to help make this process as painless as possible: **The Short-and-Snappy, It'll-Make-You-Happy Business Plan**. It is concise and practical, and once you're done, you'll love it.

The Short-and-Snappy, It'll-Make-You-Happy-Business Plan provides key elements for success:

- **Direction**—You can use your business plan to tell you what you're going to do and what you're *not* doing to do as you develop your business. If you don't know where you're going, you are likely to arrive at an undesirable location.
- **Focus**—The business plan guides you from the general to the specific. Many of us are mildly fuzzy-headed therapists, and the plan shows us how to be practical and pragmatic and get down to earth.
- **Credibility**—People have confidence in those who plan. Your completed business plan can be used to present your services to potential referral sources; loan officers (you will need a business plan if you decide you need a loan); and your partner (if you have one) if she or he is skeptical about your venture.

The Short-and-Snappy, It'll-Make-You-Happy Business Plan

This business plan has five sequential parts that move from the general to the specific: Vision, Mission, Objectives, Strategies, and Action Steps. The **vision** is the big picture—your dream, combined with what you learned in your marketing research. The good news is that you completed most of this step in chapter 5. You can simply review your vision statement, modify it if you wish, and transfer it to your business plan.

The **mission statement** defines your overriding purpose, listing in general terms the services you want to offer, your client base, and perhaps a summary of your philosophy of treatment.

Your **objectives** make your mission statement concrete and detailed. For example, if your mission statement states that you will provide treatment for court-referred offenders with the goal of helping them to

avoid recidivism, your objectives might indicate that you will provide substance abuse services to 40 adolescents per year who have been arrested as Minors in Possession in West River County.

Strategies include general approaches to achieving your objectives. For example, one of your basic strategies might be to interact with court personnel on a weekly basis—either in person, by phone, or with reports.

Actions steps are the specific and concrete activities that you will use to meet your objectives. All the detail that you've probably wanted to include in the previous sections needs to be spelled out here. You can set deadlines for yourself. Action steps may include marketing activities such as taking a probation officer to lunch or meeting with another therapist in your office. Action steps could also involve programming activities (such as writing a curriculum for a new program for teenaged DWIs) or operations (such as hiring an accountant or increasing your office manager's hours from half-time to full-time).

Step 1: Your vision

The vision is a word picture of what you want your business to look like and to do—it's your dream. It's an overview in one or two sentences that includes specific information about your services, clients, location, and employees projected three years into the future. When you create your vision, be passionate, be excited, and boldly state what you dream of and desperately want to do. Particularly when you are first writing, allow yourself to just say whatever it is you want to say. Don't succumb to editing until you have written an entire draft of your vision. If you begin editing too soon your enthusiasm and dream will shrivel before they take shape on the page.


The box below shows two examples of vision statements.

- *Counseling and Support Services, located in Lafayette, Indiana, provides educational and experiential treatment utilizing play, art, and music therapy for those who have suffered loss through divorce or the death of a partner or other significant person and are experiencing life-transition struggles. Counseling and Support Services is staffed by one full-time therapist and one part-time receptionist-bookkeeper.*

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Take a look at what you wrote in chapter 5. You have learned a lot since then, and your thinking is more attuned to the realities of the business of establishing an agency. Taking into account what you have learned from your market surveys and how to stake your territory, use the space below to rewrite your vision. It doesn't have to be "final draft" perfect, but it does need to be written down.



Do not omit this step! 

Step 2: Your mission statement

Twenty or 30 years ago, very few businesses had mission statements. Today, almost every business has a statement of purpose that it makes readily available to clients and customers. A mission statement demonstrates that you do, in fact, have an overriding purpose. It demonstrates that you have thought about your purpose and spent the time necessary to craft a statement that is clear and reads well. Most often, the most effective mission statements are brief—and also memorable.

Writing a mission statement has both an internal and an external purpose. Internally, writing the mission statement forces you to ruminate about what you want to do and how you want to do it. The completed mission statement provides you with a sense of direction both now and later. Six months from now, let's suppose that a new therapist approaches you about joining your agency. She's interested in working with children. You look back at your mission statement and ask, "Does that fit into the plan I have for this agency?" Perhaps it does, and you welcome a new partner. Perhaps it doesn't. You say you would be willing to have this person use office space but do not feel her goals coincide with your mission. Either way, *the mission statement has given you a foundation for making the decision.*

Externally, the mission statement gives other people, such as probation officers, an understanding of what your agency does.

Writing your mission statement

The key to writing a strong mission statement is to describe your purpose in the present tense, or as though it's already happening. Mission statements often start with "To," which helps focus on action, as the examples below demonstrate.


To teach women who use substances excessively to understand the nature and consequences of their use and to achieve sobriety and create a new way of life.

To help men let go of constricting and destructive patterns of behavior caused by male socialization and replace them with a new openness to other people and their own feelings through experiential individual and group counseling.

To reduce recidivism and restore criminals to healthy lives by teaching them accountability, empathy, and respect through psychoeducational groups and cognitive re-orientation.



Here's some space to write your mission statement.

Don't omit this step! 

Step 3: Objectives

The vision and mission statements portray the big picture but omit the specific details of what you want your business to achieve. Objectives include *measurable outcomes*, a term you probably remember from writing treatment plans. For example, “The client will appear daily for breath tests and will attend five AA meetings and two counseling sessions per week for the next four months.”

Notice that the client’s treatment objective contains timeframes as well as achievable and quantifiable results.

In the same way, your business objectives will outline achievable, quantifiable goals that you expect your practice to meet within specified timeframes. To focus on objectives, ask yourself these questions:

- What parameters will I use to know that my business is successful?
- What would I want my business to look like in three years so that I felt satisfied that I’d made the best decisions in planning and establishing my agency?
- What features of my business would people notice that would encourage them to make referrals to my agency?

Objectives often include markers, or measurable parameters, that let you know if you are meeting your objectives. When I travel to Beaver Island by way of Charlevoix, for example, I know that Cadillac is exactly half-way. If I want to catch the 4:30 ferry, I’d better be out of Cadillac by 2:30. Here are some markers you might want to consider as you develop your objectives:

- Your projections of the number of clients attending your agency on a particular date
- The percentage increase in clients each year
- The reduction in recidivism rates within your client base over a specific time period
- The amount of revenue from client payments for services and payments from other therapists for office space
- The results of pre- and post-test scores for clients and client satisfaction surveys

Here are some sample objectives:

To establish a referral network with the 68th District Court in Poole County from which the agency receives 100 clients per year within three years.

To create a base of 60 new self-referred anger management clients per year within three years through Internet and yellow pages advertising, community presentations, and referrals from other therapists.

To create an agency staffed by an agency administrator, a part-time accountant, and four part-time therapists within three years.

To generate revenues of \$140,000 every year while incurring expenses of \$60,000, resulting in a yearly personal income of \$80,000 (after three years of operation).



Set your objectives for your agency here.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

4. _____
5. _____

Step 4: Strategies

Your strategies spell out the tactics you'll take to achieve your objectives. You'll need to develop strategies for these three key areas:

1. Obtaining and keeping clients—Who are they and how will you reel them in?
2. Establishing productive relationships with probation officers and other court staff, such as drug court judges, attorneys, court administrators, and secretaries. What do they want from a service provider? What will set you apart?
3. Providing effective treatment for the population you are serving.

Here are some sample strategies:

I will meet with at least one probation officer per month to tell him or her about my programs and the progress of his or her clients.

I will attend a workshop at least once every three months and report on what I learned either at a court staff meeting or in a memo to the probation staff.

I will send attendance reports once a week and narrative progress reports every two weeks so the courts and other referral agencies perceive that I am accountable in running my programs and that I know my clients.



Use the lines below to draft at least one strategy for each of your objectives. Objectives frequently have two or three, but one will get you started for now.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Step 5: Action Steps

Action time. This is the last and most specific step of the five-step Short-and-Snappy, It'll-Make-You-Happy-Business Plan. Your strategies drive your actions. They tell you what you need to do to accomplish your objectives. The examples below show precise action steps that would lead to the accomplishment of specified goals:

I call the Chamber of Commerce and ask to give a short presentation that will explain how my adolescent treatment programs succeed where others fail.

I attend the National Drug Court Institute fall Treatment Provider Training.

I incorporate the Relationship History, an excellent program developed by EMERGE Inc in Boston, into my Batterer Intervention Program. After becoming familiar with this program, I explain its effectiveness to probation officers.

I call Bill S., a probation officer at the 71st District Court, to tell him about particular clients and explain why I am pleased or concerned about them.

I use QuickBooks to track the success of various programs.

Even though you are still creating the first draft of your Short-and-Snappy Business Plan, you've done enough work to let you outline several action steps.



Use the lines below to sketch out the action steps you could take to execute at least two of your strategies.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Putting it all together

Let's see how these five elements of the Short-and-Snappy, It'll-Make-You-Happy-Business Plan fit together. We'll use Sylvia as an example. Sylvia worked for an agency for four years after earning her master's degree with a dual emphasis in adolescent and occupational psychology. Three years ago, she opened her own agency, Metamorphosis. Metamorphosis concentrates on treating a range of adolescent-related problems: depression, ADHD, learning disorders, divorcing parents, anorexia, and addictions.

Although Sylvia's agency is financially solvent, she feels professionally in a rut and wants to see her business grow to include adult clients. There is little opportunity for expanding her practice to include occupational psychology, even on a part-time basis. However, after completing court marketing surveys for all the district, circuit, and family courts within a 50-mile radius of her office, Sylvia is confident that she will be able to expand her agency to include at least one-third court-referred clients. Here is Sylvia's first draft of her **vision statement**:

Metamorphosis, located in Alameda, California, offers diagnostic services and treatment programs for two distinct groups of clients: 1) children 10-18 years of age diagnosed with learning disorders, particularly those associated with ADHD and autism spectrum disorders, and 2) adults referred by the courts for alcohol and drug addictions and business-related crimes such as embezzlement, fraud, and

larceny. *Metamorphosis employs one full-time therapist, one part-time therapist, and one part-time receptionist.*

Sylvia's **mission statement** reflects the dual nature of the practice she plans to build:

To guide adults who use alcohol and other substances addictively to understand the nature and consequences of their use, and to help them achieve abstinence as a first step in creating a sober, rewarding, and accountable life.

To increase awareness among adults convicted of embezzlement and other fraudulent business activities of the human cost of white-collar crime, with the long-term goal of establishing accountability for their actions.

To increase the probability of successful academic and social interactions of teens of average to above-average intelligence who have been diagnosed with ADD, ADHD, nonverbal learning disorders, and pervasive developmental disorders, particularly Asperger's Syndrome.

The third step in the Short-and-Snappy Business Plan calls for **objectives** that are achievable, quantifiable, and can be met within a specified timeframe. Sylvia's business plan uses a three-year timeframe. Her **objectives** are succinct and straightforward and are closely tied to her vision and mission statements. Because the private practice side of Metamorphosis is fairly well established, Sylvia's objectives focus on maintaining her programs for teenagers while building her court-referred clientele. Note how Sylvia's objectives lead to strategies, and her strategies lead to actions.

To establish court-referred clients as one-third of the caseload (approximately 60 clients per year) at Metamorphosis.

To generate \$90,000 in billable hours.

To achieve a recidivism rate of less than 20% as measured one year after graduation with court-ordered clients.

To achieve positive social and academic outcomes as measured by pre- and post-intervention testing and reporting scales from teachers, parents, and clients for teenaged clients diagnosed with ADD, ADHD, nonverbal learning disorders, and pervasive developmental disorders, particularly Asperger's Syndrome.

The final two elements of Sylvia's Short-and-Snappy Business Plan, **strategies** and **action steps**, are listed with her **objectives** to show how objectives, strategies, and action steps will work together to help Sylvia reposition Metamorphosis as an agency with both private and court-referred clients.

Objective One: *to establish court-referred clients as one-third of the caseload (approximately 60 clients per year) at Metamorphosis*

Strategy: Position company location to be more geographically central to both clientele and probation officers

Action: Find location that is within defined territory within three months

Action: Publicize pending move to probation officers and other therapists

Action: Open relocated practice within six months

Action: Give open house to publicize business offerings and growth

Strategy: Establish relationships with probation officers for district court

Action: Invite probation officers to see the facility and its accessibility

Action: Attend training at least two times/year to stay current and share the latest findings with probation officers

Objective Two: *to generate \$90,000 in billable hours*

Strategy: Secure contracts with at least two district courts as drug court treatment provider

Action: Develop portfolio explaining suggested programs and my qualifications to serve as drug court treatment provider

Action: Meet with probation officers at least six times per year

Strategy: Continue to market adolescent services and programs at schools, pediatricians' offices, and with other therapists

Action: Meet with at least one counselor from all middle school and high school guidance offices within a 15-mile radius to discuss my adolescent services and programs, particularly those involving learning and developmental disabilities

Action: Send tri-fold marketing brochure to all pediatricians and family practice physicians within a 15-mile radius

Action: Continue to market adolescent services and programs, particularly those involving learning disabilities and/or PDDs, to therapists identified through the agency marketing survey as potential sources of referrals

Objective Three: *to achieve a recidivism rate of less than 20% as measured one year after graduation with court-ordered clients*

Strategy: Develop plan to measure past and present levels of recidivism

Action: Conduct literature review on research methodology

Action: Select method and present plan to court staff to gain their cooperation

Action: Present Human Subjects material to clients and enlist their participation including signing appropriate forms

Action: Implement plan

Action: Conduct, compile and present research to court staff

Objective Four: *To achieve positive social and academic outcomes as measured by pre- and post-intervention testing and reporting scales from teachers, parents, and clients for teenaged clients diagnosed with ADD, ADHD, nonverbal learning disorders, and PDDs*

Strategy: Refine and increase knowledge of learning and pervasive developmental disorders

Action: Attend at least one American Psychology Association— approved continuing education course each year

Strategy: Increase client success through parental support and education

Action: Develop and facilitate parent workshops on effective child advocacy in working with school personnel and achieving relevant Individualized Education Plans

Action: Develop library of print and electronic educational resources for clients' parents and families

Action: Develop a pilot group social skills program for 12-15 year-old PDD clients

For additional information about writing a business plan, see the United States Small Business Administration website at www.sbaonline.sba.gov. This useful site offers detailed suggestions for writing a business plan, marketing for the small business owner, securing a loan, applicable business laws, and a wealth of relevant information for the small business owner. You can check the location of offices in your region by clicking on the map provided on the website. Local offices frequently offer low- or no-cost seminars; some training is available online.

If you have completed this chapter with thoroughness and deliberation, you have vastly increased your chances of success. If, on the other hand, you create and market your business with hasty and impulsive decisions, your future may not be so bright. Do it right. You're worth it.

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Other Mandated Clients

In this book, I have focused on court-referred clients, but there are other sources of mandated clients. State Departments of Health and Human Services may require that family members attend parenting counseling and substance abuse treatment. Schools refer students for therapy because of disruptive behavior. Employers direct hostile workers to attend anger management treatment programs and demand that employees who fail drug tests participate in drug treatment.

These other mandated clients can be gratifying to work with and provide an additional source of income. I have not addressed these clients simply because each source has its own set of expectations and procedures. If you wish to learn more about them, you can follow the strategies outlined in chapter 7, "Market Research: Getting to Know Your Neighbors."

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