

Strategy Checklist

Strategy is your most fundamental plan for succeeding and thriving. I suggest a living document in a 3-ring notebook. Update it once a year. Here is a minimum set of tabs for your strategic notebook; you'll probably need others that are unique to your situation.

□ Our Customer

Who is our customer? What segments are we addressing and not addressing, and why? This includes geographic focus. How big is each segment?

□ Our Customer's Need

What is our customer's need/problem/pain? Or: what is the job the customer is trying to accomplish? Get into *their* world, observe them directly, mindfully, and creatively. It's not just what they *say*, because sometimes they don't really know; it's what they *do*.

□ Our Solution

What are we offering that solves the customer's problem? How exactly does it solve their problem or help them do their job?

□ Channels

How will we reach our customers? Where do they hang out? How can we deploy our precious marketing resources to get on our customer's radar and tell our story?

□ Competition

Who are they? How do we differentiate ourselves from them? Please, not by *price*, unless we happen to be Wal-Mart or have other access to huge scale advantages! Develop a truthful picture of the entire competitive landscape.

□ Value Proposition

Write out a clear simple statement of the measureable and demonstrable benefits our solution brings to the customer. Use the customer's language.

□ Operations

What capabilities do we need, that we already have and don't yet have? How will we assemble them together?

□ Make Money

How will we make money doing this? This includes the price we can charge, the cost of goods sold, fixed expenses, initial and ongoing capital requirements, etc. Be realistic.



Your *thinking process* is as important as your *answers*. Your strategic plan becomes the North Star for running your operation. It is one of the key drivers for the Big Goals you'll want to establish for your team.