

# Small Business Plan - What is Your Value Proposition?

By [Peter McLean](#) ★

In the value based business, the successful business owner or manager concentrates on the unique value that his or her business offers to its customers. This 'uniqueness' is discovered only through depth of thought and rigorous analysis of the reason and purpose that one is in business for in the first place.

It involves listening intently to what customers are saying and understanding their particular needs. Engaging customers at this level creates a close bond between the business and the customer. It creates opportunities for working with and through customers in a way that delivers results that are mutually agreeable.

Deep critical reflection is demanded to arrive at effective decisions that will deliver what the customer really wants, and not just what we may want to sell to them.

The three key elements that must be adopted to ensure customer focus, create value and transform both the value-based business and its relationships with customers are:

## **Adopt a 'Customer Needs' Driving Force**

The mindset required for establishing a 'customer needs' approach must be imbedded in an understanding of the vision of the business, through a clearly articulated statement about what drives the business.

Such a driving force must be chosen by the business owner as part of setting the strategic agenda of the business. This then ensures that strategic choices are aligned to business capabilities, customers and markets and that these are properly differentiated and segmented within small business plans.

Adopting a 'customer needs' driving force results in products and services being developed by the value-based business around the current and future needs of its customers.

## **Build Strong Customer Relationships**

Helping others get what they want builds strong customer bonds.

Use your business capabilities to help your customer strengthen their position in the market. This means tailoring your products and services to the needs of the customer, within the bounds and context of a mutually beneficial and trusting relationship.

This approach also applies to the internal environment of the business. The value chain of the business that extends to customers in the external environment begins in the internal environment as a series of processes.

People accomplish these processes. Seeing employees as customers, along a continuum of service, focuses business activities at the highest level in all its dealings with each other and external customers.

“What do you want to achieve?” and “How can we help you achieve what you want?” should always be the first words out of our mouths in addressing the needs of the people around us, both in our business and to the customer in the external world. Such questions display a degree of emotional intelligence in business.

Customer requests, feedback and complaints provide the opportunity to improve products and services by incorporating the valuable information that they contain.

### **Develop Strategic Partnerships, Alliances and Networks**

Successful business owners join up processes between their companies and those of their customers in order to build an interdependent network of relationships that delivers greater returns to everyone.

When we work with and through others, we add value to what is on offer. This continuum of service and product delivery expands the reach of the value-based business and the customer.

Strategic partnerships, alliances and networks must never be entered into lightly. They must be built on a firm foundation and a shared value base. This is critical to ensure that products and services that are offered are not degraded or watered-down, in any way.

When forming such relationships it is paramount that the Mission, Vision and Values of the business are not compromised in any way. A partnership matrix framework that aligns these elements between prospective partners must be generated, as part of the business policy development process.

Business alliance and partnership relationships must be evaluated diligently before they are entered into. They require sound skills for negotiation and must be reviewed regularly as part of the business planning cycle.

Article Source: [http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Peter\\_McLean](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Peter_McLean)