

The Power of Focus

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Lack of focus is insidious in the business-world. Everyone is busy...but businesses aren't achieving strategic outcomes. Cat Matson provides some practical insight to get more focus in your business.

How many things are you 'focussed on' at the moment in your business? A lot, right?

The result of such a wide focus is like a 60 watt light globe in a football-field sized warehouse – energy is expended for very little result.

That same 60 watts can be focussed into a laser – it won't light up the whole room, but it will illuminate the target.

Most business owners get too easily caught up in distractions – things that look interesting, promising, even important..... keeping them 'busy' but not focussed on the things that really matter.

A crucial key to business success is a laser-like focus – strategically, operationally, functionally and personally.

At a strategic level, a clear vision is great but it needs to be translated into a focussed goal to pull you forward. 'Being industry leader' is a great vision but it doesn't provide focus of intention. 'Generating \$2,000,000 turnover with a staff team of 15' does.

Once clear on your goal, you need a strategy for achievement. The question to ask is, "what are the top 3 things we can do to get us closer to our goal?" That becomes your strategic focus. Anything that falls outside that strategic focus should be put aside as a distraction.

Once clear on your strategic focus, you need to translate it into strategic objectives operationally – for example, what is the focus/goal/target for the quarter? Then set the departmental or functional focus – what does each department, section, area or person need to focus on to ensure the business achieves its goal for the quarter? For example, the marketing goal could be to generate x-number of new leads. (NB: even if you don't have staff it's useful to create 'departments' for yourself – so when you've got your 'marketing hat' on, you're focussed on that, not on finance).

The personal focus then becomes the daily discipline of where you put your focus - distraction or strategic objectives. The demands on our time are greater than they've ever been before... but that's a poor excuse for not achieving your business goals.

A useful tool in that discipline is regular 'disruption-free' time – and this includes email and phone calls. The amount of oxygen on the planet won't deplete if you don't reply to an email instantly.... and despite common beliefs, your customers won't leave you if you don't reply instantly either. Everyone is different – but create blocks of time – whether it's 1 hour or 3, where you are in the 'cone of silence' to focus on things of strategic importance.



Evaluate the things that take up your time using strategic objectives as your benchmark – if it doesn't get you closer to your goal, why are you doing it? As for the things you think you have to do – have a mentor or peer check your thinking for you – often times people get so caught up in habit, they're doing things that are no longer relevant.

Outsourcing is one of the greatest allies of focus. While resources might be limited, consider the real cost to your business of your lack of focus – meaning, if you're not applying your time and energy for maximum strategic benefit, you're turning your laser-light into a standard light bulb.

To put it simply, you only have so much time in the day. So the key is focus - do only those things that contribute to your strategic objectives.

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