

Business philosophy, vision and mission – revisited

It's March already, is your practice on track for Quarter 1 of 2012? If not, says NLP Life Coach **Mark Shields**, it's time to revisit that old chestnut the Business Plan, but perhaps this time, slightly differently.

At this early stage of looking at your business from a different perspective it is paramount to establish your current thoughts, feelings, ideas, brand, profile, and what your business truly represents and stands for.

Has this changed since you started your practice and if so does your business reflect this?

What does your business now represent to you and, most importantly, your clients and the outside world?

This is the point where you examine your business philosophy, vision and mission. All three of these should form an integral beginning to any business plan or goal-setting exercise.

Have you done this in the past? I suspect not.

Philosophy

If we first look at the word philosophy and examine its meaning:

Philosophy = the study of any particular proposition such as those connected with existence, knowledge, values, reason and language.

Philosophy is distinguished from other ways of addressing such problems by its critical, generally systematic approach and its reliance on fair and balanced rational. The word "philosophy" comes from the Greek philosophia, which literally means "love of wisdom".

Let's now apply this to your business set-up. A good idea is to make a statement announcing your business identity and philosophy, making it public for the first time simply by writing it down.

This statement should represent your feelings, thoughts and rationale for your business, focusing on key business values and ethos, what you and your business truly stands for and represents.

Vision

While any business needs to constantly change to meet external environmental challenges such as competition etc, there

are certain core business ideals that remain constant and unchanged. These ideals form the business vision and are expressed in the business mission statement.

Mission statement

Your business mission statement communicates to the public your practice ethos, core values, and business ideological goals or identity.

Are you glazing over? I know: it's common for some practitioners at this stage to shy away from such business technicalities. But I urge you to stay with it: the core success strategies of any business are the same.

It is vital that you not only write down your practice mission statement but also publish it – on your website, stationery, even on the wall of your clinic or place of work. Be proud of your practice ethos and values and your clients will feel the same.

When writing a mission statement you should include:

- Your Purpose
- Your Process
- Your values
- Your goals

Ideally you want a minimum of three of each of the above when formulating your practice ethos and identity.

Purpose:

- The direction you want to take your practice
- Why you formed your practice
- What your practice will do for your customers

Process:

- How you will operate
- Logistics and location
- Methods of communication

Values (for example):

- First class customer service
- Integrity and professionalism
- Value adding services

Practice Goals:

- Short medium and long term practice plans
- To become the best at what you do
- To achieve sales and income targets

Ensure your goals follow the SMART principles of goal setting. This will ensure you set realistic and achievable goals for your practice. There's nothing worse than setting goals with no chance of achieving them – that makes no business sense at all.

CSMART stands for:

- C Commitment
- S Specific Goals
- M Measurable
- R Realistic
- T Timescales

Here's an example of a mission statement from Nutritional Therapist Karen Webb:

"The aim of Neuro Nutrition is to provide first class nutritional advice combined with quality products and services at competitive prices, to provide value for money for all our customers".

When completing your own practice mission, keep it simple and just follow the above principles. Brainstorm and write down your practice philosophy, followed by your vision and practice objectives and goals.

This will form the beginning of your first business plan, so it's important you keep it simple follow the process and write it down.

Don't be put off by the terminology or perceived complexity. You might not feel like a business expert but you are beginning to learn. ☺



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