



A Business Plan is Your Career Roadmap

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled "All Psyched Up" for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of "Life is An Adventure...every step of the way" and "Open for Business Success" is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

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Four years ago, I decided to write a Business Plan for what was then a part-time endeavour. That year end I was shocked and pleased to discover that my income had increased by several thousand dollars over the previous year. This was a good return on my investment of only a few hours of creating the plan.

Everyone knows that contractors do not begin working until they have a blueprint. Teachers develop a curriculum before starting a semester. Producers and directors require a script while sports enthusiasts play by rules and time limits that were previously established.

A story is told of the opening of *Epcot Center* in Florida. Walt Disney had died before the opening ceremony, but his wife was in attendance for the ribbon cutting. A man leaned over to her and said, "Too bad Walt wasn't here to see this". Mrs. Disney wisely replied "Oh, Walter saw this long before we did". You see, he had envisioned it and developed the plan so that it could be built.

Whether you are a large corporation, charitable organization or a small business, you need a Business Plan in order to have a clear vision of what you expect and how you will accomplish it in the next year. I challenge you to draw up the plan and then watch your goals and dreams come into reality.

The *Government of Canada* has a website where you can develop a beautiful Business Plan by merely answering questions and following the examples given. You can access this without cost. Other websites also offer tools to prepare a business plan.

If you want to experience success, it is more important that you work **ON** your business than **IN** your business. This begins with the Business Plan! With a little effort and a lot of thought you will be able to experience the business growth that you personally designed.