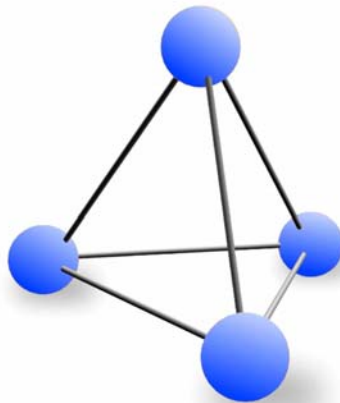


Foundations Consulting

“Supporting Your Growth”



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Corporate Profile

Our Mission

“Helping SME businesses support their growth and improve their profitability, through improved operations and smarter use of business technology.”

Offering over 18 years experience in helping clients with strategic planning, business improvement projects that involve people, process & technology issues and guiding clients through the issues surrounding succession planning.

The Foundations Consulting team offer professionalism, reliability, objectivity and a work ethic focused on client service & quality. An integral part to the way we work, is to also use the project as an opportunity for skills transfer and development/coaching of client staff.

Servicing clients both in Australia and overseas, and across a broad range of industry sectors, including: Manufacturing, Wholesale, Retail, Government and Services (incl. Telecommunications, Banking & Finance, Third Party Logistics & Transport, Charity Organisations, Health, Professional Service Providers, etc) – all of which have a ‘supply chain’ dimension to them.

Whether you are looking for a proven methodical framework & templates, or internal resources lack the skills or availability to tackle the task at hand - Foundations Consulting can bridge that gap.

Depending on the needs of our clients, we offer the following range of services:

1. Growth Readiness Review

A diagnostic review focusing on those key elements of your business that will be crucial to advancing the business to it’s next level of growth:

- Operations (Work Practices, Technology, People).
- Working Capital/Cash Flow.
- IT Network/Equipment & Software.

Key Deliverable:

- Opportunities for Improvement Report (findings of review, opportunities & recommendations, proposed IT network for your business, a road map for gradually introducing improvements, and an action plan summarising the ‘Quick Win’ initiatives and ‘Medium/Longer Term’ initiatives).

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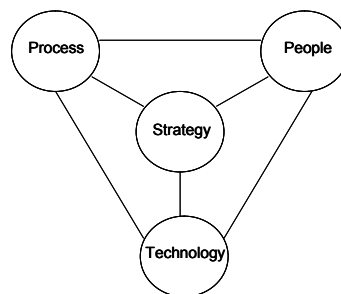
2. Strategic Planning for Small & Medium Businesses

As a business reaches a certain size or stage in its growth, there generally comes a need to introduce more formality & structure into strategic planning, setting goals/targets and proactively monitoring progress.

Key outputs from a strategic planning process should include:

- Inhibitors to Growth/Improvement Opportunities Diagnostic.
- SWOT Analysis, Key Objectives & Operating Strategies.
- Mission Statement, Core Values & Sustainable Competitive Advantage.
- Marketing & Business Development Plan.
- Operations Plan (People & Organisation, Process & Work Practices, Technology & Tools).
- Action Plan & Road-map.
- Financial Model & Budget.
- Balanced Score Card & KPI's.
- Business Risks & Contingency Planning.

The Foundations Consulting ‘Strategic Planning Framework’ provides a range of practical tools, templates & guidelines to help a SME business step through the strategic planning process. The fundamental elements that all growing business need to consider are best represented in the ‘Business Operating Model’ shown below.



3. Specialist Assistance to Senior Management Team/ Board Participation

As a business seeks to transform itself and prepare for the next wave of growth, there can be value in inviting an independent specialist/adviser to support the senior management team and/or Board of Directors in a coaching/mentoring role. This type of role can enable a SME business to access a fresh range of experience & knowledge in the areas of IT and supply chain operations (ideas & strategies for dealing with suppliers & customers, distribution and inventory management, etc) as well as suggestions on staff & HR management issues, organisation structure, etc. This may take the form of either a permanent part-time role or alternatively specialist assistance on request (ie. attend a strategic planning day, etc).

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4. IT Planning for Small & Medium Businesses

A detailed IT plan to support the future business direction and it's anticipated growth. It will examine key questions such as:

- What degree of IT equipment should I plan to invest in?
- Do I have the right operating software to support the business going forward? What options are there in the marketplace today?
- How should we design our IT network & infrastructure to support our future needs?
- What is the most cost effective way to put all this in place?
- What type of skills & IT staff should we recruit in-house as opposed to what we should look to 3rd party specialists for?
- Where should we start, and in what sequence should we start to introduce these improvements?

Key Deliverable:

- IT Plan for Your Business (future business direction & objectives, review of current application software and IT equipment/infrastructure, current business pressures & constraints, proposed future IT equipment & infrastructure, business operating software options, leveraging the Internet, business continuity & disaster recovery plans, organisation impact, investment summary, implementation roadmap & action plan).

5. Software Shortlisting & Evaluations

For those businesses that have decided to upgrade/replace their current transaction/operating software, a pragmatic approach to identifying which products on the marketplace are suitable for your business and how to step through the evaluation process. Designed to address all the key criteria for a risk free selection and ensure the right product and vendor for your business.

Key categories of software include:

- Financial Systems.
- Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Systems (incl. Warehouse Management Systems - WMS).
- Point-of-Sale (POS) Systems.
- Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tools.

Key Deliverables:

- Statement of Functional Requirements.
- Shortlist of Candidate Solutions for Your Business.
- Request for Proposal Document (if required).
- Evaluation Criteria Report Card.
- Selected Product/Vendor.
- Preliminary Cost/Benefit Model for Implementation.

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6. Software Vendor Contract Negotiation

A pragmatic approach to negotiating and documenting a fair and equitable contract between yourself and the software vendor. The process seeks to:

- Establish a healthy working relationship between your business & the vendor.
- Ensure each party has complete & clear understanding of all aspects of the contract & pricing arrangements, as well as the expectations of each party.
- Minimise business risk where possible.
- Minimise cost to your business where possible.

Key Deliverable:

- Software Vendor Contract:
 - Nature of Licence.
 - Annual Software Support & Maintenance Services.
 - Payment Conditions & Schedule (trigger dates).
 - Modification/Development/Interface Work (if applicable).
 - Escrow Agreement (if applicable).
 - Confidential Information.
 - Force Majeure.
 - Termination.
 - Dispute Resolution.
 - Special Conditions.
 - Software Modules & Documentation.
 - Additional Services & Basis for Costings.

7. Hardware Selection

Providing assistance in specifying the type and sophistication of IT equipment suitable for your business, understanding the pro's & con's of different brands on the marketplace, and considering the financial options to obtaining the equipment (ie. Purchase Outright, Lease/Rent).

Key categories of hardware include:

- Office IT Equipment (servers, PC's, laptops, printers, firewalls, photocopiers, scanners, fax, etc).
- Barcode Scanning & Portable Hand-held Devices (incl. label printers & wireless networks, etc).

Key Deliverables:

- IT Hardware Specifications.
- Summary of Options for Your Business (incl. cost estimates).

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8. Project Implementation Planning & Co-ordination

Setting up a project for success requires solid planning and an appreciation of the typical risks that come with implementation projects. Experience has shown that there are a number of key foundation stones required, to help ensure a project gets off on the right foot:

- Having in place a detailed project task plan and timeline. (The plan needs to combine the vendor project plan with internal tasks that the vendor will assume the client will handle).
- Having a clear appreciation of the internal & external resource requirements. (This varies depending on the availability of internal staff and the expertise required to execute certain roles, for example it is very common to engage an experienced Project Manager).
- Having a tight vendor contract, with a clear understanding of which party is responsible for what. (It is not uncommon for vendors to expect the client to handle the ‘Change Management’ elements like end user training, communications, process and procedure design & documentation, new position descriptions, HR issues, etc).
- Having a detailed statement of cost/benefit (business case) for the project. (This needs to reflect hardware, software, implementation, recurring costs, etc).

Key Deliverables:

- Project Plan & Timeline (vendor & client responsibilities).
- Resource Plan (internal & external resources).
- Suggested Project Team Structure.
- Preliminary Change Impact Assessment (who, how many, where, impacted by what, strategies to address the ‘change management’ issues, etc).
- Finalised Vendor Contract(s).
- Project Cost/Benefit.
- Project Issues Register.
- Communications Plan (ensuring the right messages, get to the right people, at the right time).

With these key foundation stones in place, there is the option of handing over to an internal resource to execute, or alternatively retaining an experienced Project & Change Manager to oversee the project activities right through to ‘go-live’ with the new system.

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9. Recruitment for Key Roles

As a business reaches a certain size, there generally comes a need to recruit permanent resources into key roles within the business. Once that strategic decision has been made, there can be value in engaging some professional assistance to deal with key steps such as:

- Defining the role and position description.
- Determining the recruitment strategy (ie. advertise – which can be costly, or choose to use other industry networks/professional contacts, etc).
- Participating in the search and screening of possible candidates.
- Involvement in the interview process and final selection.

Key roles for a SME business might include:

- Financial Controllers.
- IT Managers.
- IT Support Analysts.
- Project Managers & Business Analysts

Key Deliverables:

- Position Description.
- Shortlist of Candidates (if required).
- Proforma for Conducting Interviews.

10. HR Planning & Co-ordination for Small & Medium Businesses

As your business grows, so does the need to introduce certain levels of formality and structure within the HR area of the business:

- Position Descriptions.
- Recruitment Planning & Interviews.
- Induction/Orientation Programs.
- Performance Appraisal Forms.
- Remuneration & Retention Strategies.
- Training Plans & Coaching.
- Succession Planning.
- Resignation & Departures.

There are a number of simple tools, templates and guidelines that can support a SME business in these HR areas.

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11. Business Transition & Succession Planning

As family business owners start to plan their retirement and how they will exit their business, it is critical that the business puts in place a well considered & structured ‘Transition Plan’ – sometimes referred to as a ‘Succession Plan’.

In constructing a ‘Transition Plan’ for your business, the key questions you will need to explore include:

- Ownership of the business going forward (Family, MBO, Trade Sale, IPO, Private Equity, Close the Business)?
- Management of the business going forward (family participation, existing staff/management, recruit external resources)?
- What will be your ongoing role in the business after retirement?
- What do your children really want to do? What are their career plans?
- What will be their role?
- Are they capable/ready to fill those key roles?
- How will their performance be measured?
- How will they be remunerated?
- How will family issues affecting the business be discussed and disputes resolved?

In those circumstances where the family will continue to hold ownership in the business and/or a new generation is entering the business, a ‘Family Business Constitution’ document provides a practical framework in which to gradually explore each of these areas and define your preferred direction.

The Foundations Consulting ‘Succession Planning Framework’ provides a range of practical tools, templates & guidelines to help a SME business step through the business transition & succession planning process.

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