

# How's Your Business Health?

Trina Hoefling

People today are more health-oriented. We have wellness clinics now, not just hospitals. **Don't we owe our businesses the same preventive care?** We take our cars for tune-ups, our bodies for check-ups, our teeth for cleanings; but most businesses wait until the disease is terminal before we consider treatment. By then, radical treatments are needed, some which kill faster than the disease.

Start today by taking this **Business Health Check-Up**. Check-ups are needed for many business facets, like production/service processes, customer service, and financial health. Check-ups can be conducted for identifying growth "stuck points." If identified early enough, the business can avoid becoming "superglued" to a certain size.

This check-up will help you see how well your **strategic priority is making it to the bottom line**. [Warning: If you cannot immediately identify your priority, don't take this check-up; call your Planning Physician immediately!]

Use your own judgment in scoring. If you "pass" with flying colors, give yourself full credit. For something less, credit yourself less.

## THE WALK TO...

\_\_\_\_ [up to 5 points]      Good Health Check 1

*Identify your newest key stakeholder.* How hard was that? Was the "effort" appropriate to your size business?

\_\_\_\_ [up to 10]      Good Health Check 2

*Have a casual conversation with him or her.* Ask about the business' value in his or her eyes. How are you doing from their perspective? How do you compete successfully?

\_\_\_\_ [up to 10]      Good Health Check 3

*Continue your conversation.* Ask what s/he thinks your strategic priority is. What can/does s/he do to help it happen? If you get a confused, muddled response, or a general statement, you score nothing. General knowledge isn't any use to you --or your business--if it can't be translated into specific actions leading to goal accomplishment.

\_\_\_ [up to -10]

#### **Good Health Check 4**

*Think of a stakeholder that you would call a "seasoned veteran". Is s/he still invested in your success? If not, or has a LOT to say (also known as bending your ear), that's a warning -- subtract 10. The communication in your business is stifled, and feedback isn't getting to you.*

\_\_\_ [+ or - 5]

#### **Good Health Check 5**

*Ask your veteran one simple question: "How are things?" If you get a general response, or "same ol' same ol'," subtract. If you get numbers, strategies, excitement, specifics, add.*

### **THE WALK-THROUGH...**

\_\_\_ [up to 10]

#### **Good Health Check 6**

*After business hours, leisurely walk through the entire operation. Are there scraps of paper all over? Are files piled high? These may be signs of antiquated information systems which slow productivity, inhibit efficiency, and increase the odds of mistakes.*

### **THE WADE-THROUGH...**

\_\_\_ [up to 15]

#### **Good Health Check 7**

*Assemble all the reports you received or were generated within your business last month. Put them on your clean desk. Make a second pile of all internal correspondence that crossed your desk last month. For each document, memo, and piece of mail, ask:*

- X Why was this generated?
- X Why did it come to me?
- X How have I used it? Which do I use to make decisions?
- X What is redundant? What isn't necessary?
- X Which pieces address your strategic priority, or support that priority?
- X Is there someone else who should be getting this instead?

Every document your business generates costs money. Think of each report as a \$100 bill.

### **HOW'D YOU DO?**

**47 - 55** Excellent health. Congratulations!

**38 - 46** Wellness vitamins, Improving your diet and exercise are excellent investments. Some of you are self-disciplined, some may want a "personal business trainer."

**33 - 37** No need for hospitalization. Yet.  
**27 - 32** A lifestyle change recommended.

### **Now What?**

Hold a wellness meeting. State what you've done and why, and explain what you found regarding the business' financial health, healthy findings, and health concerns.

Ask for two things:

- X additions to concerns list
- X agreement/disagreement with concerns listed.

*Note: If this is the only check-up you've done, either use additions to suggest where next checkups should occur, or define carefully and fully the focus of this check-up.*

Have stakeholders privately vote for the two main health risks to your strategic priority. Tally votes and use the information to get in shape!

If you do an annual check-up, you may well prevent life-threatening business illness.