

# The Real Truth about Business Plans- What the Consultants Don't tell You!

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Do you have a Business Plan? Congratulations, but you are in a small minority. And if you have a plan, is it integral to your business, and instrumental to its growth? If the answer to this question is yes, then you need to read no further. However, in Empower Business Solutions experience, even if they have a plan, most business owners leave it languishing on their bottom shelf, gathering dust!

**Our dirty little secret is this:** *most business consultants* are only interested in selling their time or their 'Business Plan in a Box' but know that for a business plan to be useful, it has to be part of a Business Management System. But this is a much harder proposition for the consultant to sell, particularly to small business owners who are just looking for a quick fix. So most consultants just sell a quick fix solution. Once owners have prepared their "fill in the blanks" plan, they expect it to transform their business overnight just by its mere existence. And because this does not happen, it ends up on the bottom shelf.

Business Plans do work, but you have to make them work. It is not a one-off exercise. If you buy a 'Business Plan in a Box', you need to understand that you are responsible for maintaining the plan. You also need to satisfy yourself that the product you buy is not just a fill in the blanks product. These plans always end up on the bottom shelf. They don't show you how to do your strategic analysis (which is never a fill in the blanks exercise- no matter what someone tells you).

Business Planning is a real soul searching exercise for the business owner. You have to be brutally honest with yourself. Even if you prepare your plan yourself (without a coach), get someone else involved to keep you honest! Looking at examples of what others have done can help, but your business will have different strengths and weaknesses and will operate in a different marketplace. And lastly, make sure the off-the-shelf product you choose will show you how to implement your plan into your business.

## When a good consultant prepares a Business Plan they will:

- undertake a rigorous (and challenging) review of the strengths & weaknesses of your business
- show you how the plan should be implemented into your business process
- give you at least one review of your performance against your plan six months after the plan has been delivered.

While this will require a larger investment than a 'Business Plan in a Box' and is a harder sell for a consultant, this will ensure that your plan does not end up on the bottom shelf and that your investment is not wasted!

Business Planning is not an easy process. It takes time and commitment. You don't just do it once. This is not what business owners want to hear, and what most consultants won't tell you, because it might cost them a sale. But the rewards from a well implemented business plan are worth many times your investment. To find out more about how a business plan can help your business, visit our website:

<http://www.empowersolutions.com.au>

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