

Business Health Self-Assessment Questionnaire

It's easy to be consumed by the day-to-day challenges; but success depends on your daily efforts being aligned with long-term goals. Please take a moment to ask yourself the following questions:

- Do we have a Company Mission that effectively aligns employees and guides decisions?
- What are our short-term and long-term business goals? Do we have a plan?
- Do we have a legal form and structure that is appropriate for our business and serves the interests of its owners?
- What is our business culture? What do we want it to be?
- Are our company's internal organizational structure, systems and compensation arrangements (and other staff motivators) aligned with our mission, business plan and culture, so that they work together to promote the achievement of company goals?
- Have we identified our competitive advantages and are we effectively engaging them?
- Have we identified our competitive disadvantages and are we effectively addressing them?
- Do we have the right mix of tangible and intangible property and human resources and are they working together effectively in our business?
- Do we know and understand our customers and our competition?
- Have we reviewed and updated our business plan recently enough to know that it's current?
- Are our company's "internal" relationships (*e.g.*, owners, employees, and with respect to property rights) secure, healthy, and in compliance bilaterally? Is our intellectual property being identified and protected (legally and business-wise)? What are our vulnerabilities and risks in these relationships? Are the risks being minimized? Are systems and policies in place to reduce potential problems and misunderstandings?
- Are our company's "external" relationships (*e.g.*, with suppliers, customers and governmental authorities) secure, healthy and in compliance bilaterally? Are appropriate contracts in place and understood? Have vulnerabilities, risks and opportunities been identified and addressed both from a business and a legal perspective? Is the value in these relationships being captured and protected? Are new relationships being negotiated and documented in a way that balances both legal and business issues to ensure the best deal and the best protections under the circumstances?
- Are we continuously identifying market opportunities and ways to exploit them, including product and service development?
- Have we identified and taken action to improve the weaknesses and "choke points" in information and work-flow systems that can impede our ability to meet customer demands and grow?
- Is available information (sales, marketing, accounting, legal, etc.) being effectively integrated for a broader perspective, the identification and analysis of business issues, and inter-functional communication and decision-making?
- Do we have enough cash, and an effective mix of equity, short-term and long-term debt?
- Do we have positive and supportive relationships with all stakeholders in our business?
- Are managers timely getting the financial information they need to effectively run our business?
- Are financial and other systems collecting the information I and other managers need, and presenting it to us in a usable manner? Do our managers know what to do with the information?
- Do we have a Growth Plan? Is it consistent with our business plan, our organizational structure and our systems? Are we on track financially to realize our growth targets?
- Do we have a way to identify risks and "problems" while they are still small, and a way to address them once identified?
- Are actual and potential legal issues promptly identified, sensitively addressed at an appropriate level within our organization, and effectively resolved?
- Are all ongoing disputes being effectively managed to control both financial and non-financial risks?
- Do our company owners need and have an exit strategy? Is the business being grown in a manner that enhances its value for that strategy?

If you aren't satisfied with your answers to any of the foregoing, **MARK BERNSELY, the Southern California Business DoctorSM** can add value to your business.

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