



## TOOLKIT 2 – DEVELOPING YOUR BUSINESS SKILLS

- ❖ Ensure your business continues to improve by developing your business skills.
- ❖ Develop your confidence and competence as a Top Manager.
- ❖ Continue to learn, grow and enjoy your work.

### KEY PRINCIPLE

**Business Development = Management Development**

Develop the Managers and the business develops is a truism found in every business.

If your business is stagnating, tired and no fun anymore this may reflect where you are right now. When did you last invest in you?

Have you stopped learning – other than day-to-day problem solving? When did you last get a personal MOT? It might be time to get going again and to invest in developing you and your business.

***Here are three time-tested ways to do it.***

Pick the one that suits you.

1. **Delivering your strategy**
2. **Developing business competencies**
3. **Hiring a personal coach**

# 1. DELIVERING YOUR STRATEGY

## 1.1 Considering your business strategy.

(Mission, Vision, Values, Products and Markets)

- What does your strategy demand that you personally need to do well or differently right now in order to ensure its successful implementation?

*Example*

- develop a strong team
  - find new opportunities
  - create new customers
  - raise capital for investment
  - drive down costs etc.
- Consider completing the toolkit 12 'Role clarification'; this will help you to clarify your priorities.

## 1.2 Which skills do you already possess and which do you need to develop?

Ask your colleagues for an objective view.

Summarise your business skills development needs.

<b>EXAMPLE: A CEO OF AN INSURANCE BUSINESS</b>	
<b>SKILLS POSSESSED</b>	<b>SKILLS REQUIRED</b>
Strategy setting	Coaching people
Picking the right people	Motivating people
Networking with the investors	Championing change
Problem solving	Communicating effectively
Commercial awareness	

## 1.3 In order to develop the skills, choose an option that suits your style:

- Ask a trusted confidante to help you develop a management development plan.
- Seek out and talk to fellow entrepreneurs who have been through a similar development experience.
- Book yourself on a business skills development programme for options).

## 2. DEVELOPING TOP MANAGEMENT KEY BUSINESS COMPETENCIES

Assess yourself against these competencies, which have been developed by some highly successful European businesses. These are not 'the' management competencies but they are used by several businesses.

If you are brave enough, ask your team or colleagues to complete it for you as well!

<b>Very False</b>					<b>Very True</b>
1	2	3	4	5	

1. **LEADERSHIP:** *Leading an effective team to produce results beyond expectations.*

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| • Develops a shared purpose across the business.        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| • Creates an environment that inspires people to excel. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| • Is an inspirational role model.                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

2. **COMMUNICATION:** *Encourages understanding by communicating effectively.*

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| • Actively promotes the company externally.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| • Encourages open communication and feedback.                                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| • Ensures everybody is clear about their roles, the business's aims and key issues. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

3. **COMMERCIAL AWARENESS:** *Considers costs and profits in all activities and decisions.*

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| • Ensures people's actions are commercial at all times.                              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| • Constantly picks up opportunities and threats.                                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| • Keeps abreast of customer and competitor trends and activity and communicates this | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

4. **CHANGE ORIENTATION:** *Implementing change to drive business improvement.*

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| • Creates an environment where people continually improve the business. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| • Constantly challenges existing process and thinking.                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| • Champions change in the business.                                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Very False					Very True
1	2	3	4	5	

5. **WORKING WITH OTHERS:** *Collaborating with others to improve business performance.*

- Promotes open communication and collaboration. 1 2 3 4 5
- Creates a climate that promotes honesty, openness and integrity. 1 2 3 4 5
- Promotes cross-functional team working. 1 2 3 4 5

6. **DEVELOPING PEOPLE:** *Creates opportunities to develop self and others.*

- Demonstrate the importance of people development throughout the business. 1 2 3 4 5
- Makes training and development a way of life in the business. 1 2 3 4 5
- Acts as a role model by developing self. 1 2 3 4 5

7. **TAKING RESPONSIBILITY:** *Resolves issues and delivers solutions.*

- Ensures top team focus on key strategic priorities. 1 2 3 4 5
- Takes personal responsibility for the designing and delivery of the strategy. 1 2 3 4 5
- Ensures top team accept shared responsibility for complex business decisions. 1 2 3 4 5

8. **PRACTICAL THINKING:** *Seeking and finding pragmatic solutions.*

- Creates innovative solutions to complex issues. 1 2 3 4 5
- Good at problem solving. 1 2 3 4 5
- Ensures a flow of good ideas get turned in to business improvement actions. 1 2 3 4 5

9. **PLANNING:** *Formulate actions to achieve objectives.*

- Ensures everybody is clear about how these roles fit with the business plan. 1 2 3 4 5
- Develops a continuous improvement culture into the plan. 1 2 3 4 5
- Ensures agreed actions are implemented successfully. 1 2 3 4 5

	<b>Very False</b>				<b>Very True</b>
	1	2	3	4	5

10. **QUALITY FOCUS:** *Continually improving standards.*

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| • Benchmarks company performance.                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| • Ensures consistent achievement of company standards. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| • Ensures managers review and improve quality.         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**INTERPRETING YOUR SCORES**

- Scores of 4 or 5 would be regarded as strengths.
- Scores of 1 or 2 would probably be regarded as weaknesses.
- A score of 3 would be average.

Q. Which of these competencies do you really need to deliver your strategy?

- Are they currently strengths?
- Which do you need to develop?

In the first column of the log provided, list your development needs, based on your analysis of your scores and your business needs right now.

Talk to someone you trust about your needs.

Add planned actions to the log and target dates for completion.

Start doing something – anything...

### 3. HIRE A PERSONAL COACH

- Fitness fanatics have been hiring personal coaches and trainers to help them get their bodies in shape for years. This often proves a good investment.

Have you thought about hiring a personal coach to help you get your management skills in shape? This is a fast growing trend in the business world today.

Those who have used a coach, often report significant gains in confidence and competencies.

- Investigate hiring a personal coach if this suits your needs and style.
- Ask around in order to find out who the good coaches are in your area.

#### ***SOME TYPICAL REASONS FOR HIRING A COACH***

- **New into a role – need development**
- **Help to manage ‘difficult people’**
- **To take a more strategic perspective**
- **To challenge and change a culture**
- **To manage a new/difficult project**
- **To become more assertive in managing people**
- **To develop leadership skills**

**TIP:** Have a go at toolkit 3 ‘Developing your personal qualities’ – it complements this one.

Development Area	Proposed actions	Date to be completed by	Completion date
(Example)  Championing change          Commercial awareness	Speak with D. Hogg from ABC holdings who have currently been through a big change programme and find out what worked and what needs to be focused on	2 <sup>nd</sup> April (date of next breakfast meeting)	2 <sup>nd</sup> April
	Undertake a Lewin's forcefield analysis to highlight the things in the business that are driving towards change and the things that are restraining change within my business.	10 <sup>th</sup> April	5 <sup>th</sup> April
	Communicate the above to staff	12 <sup>th</sup> April	12 <sup>th</sup> April
	Ask the staff to assist in putting together an action plan on how to break down the barriers, highlighting who needs to be involved in the management of the events	20 <sup>th</sup> April	25 <sup>th</sup> April
	Undertake some mystery shopping of DIY stores within a 20 mile radius	5 <sup>th</sup> April	3 <sup>rd</sup> April
	Rate the product range, service and price against our own		
	Communicate this to my staff	7 <sup>th</sup> April	7 <sup>th</sup> April
	Create action plan to deal with any issues that are highlighted	12 <sup>th</sup> April	11 <sup>th</sup> April

<b>Development Area</b>	<b>Proposed actions</b>	<b>Date to be completed by</b>	<b>Completion date</b>