



## Chapter 1 The Future State

### Your Future Statement

At the heart of your business must be your life. That means every time you aspire to a sales target, or new project, you are doing so to reach an end game, a Future State. This statement of your future must have three vital components to be effective. It must be:

#### Qualitative

Life drives business, not the other way around. But you cannot easily quantify happiness. As a result, you need to define what is your perfect existence. That may be spending more time with your children, or grandchildren. It could be travelling. Whatever it is, it is something you cannot do yet for many reasons, often financial, sometimes emotional (fulfilment).

Speak to business leaders and they will describe how they wish they could spend more time living and less time working. They wish their lives were not so filled with stress and pressure. They want to be happier. That is a pretty reasonable set of demands!

The solution lies in how you think, how you feel and how you live your values. These are soft measures, not hard measures, but we live in a business culture that says if you cannot measure it, you cannot manage it, so do not do it. You must break free from that restrictive philosophy.

To achieve long-term success, you must go above and beyond in terms of your commitment and creativity, not just in the good times, but also in the worst of times. You will only do that if you can see a light at the end of the tunnel, a better life for your family, for your friends, for happiness. Not just for money.

That is why your Future State must describe what your perfect life in business looks like, what you want to be doing in your ideal world – in and out of work. There are no rules on this; no consultant or anyone else can tell you the answers; it is your life.

### Quantitative

Your Future State is just wishful thinking without financial foundations.

You have taken the first step; you have written down a destination, but that is not enough. After aspiration comes perspiration, and if you are going to exert effort in the right places on your journey, you need to know you are on track. That means milestones and markers. Your task is to create, not wildly and without direction, but with focus and application.

That means you now need to translate those life goals into business goals. How much money does your business need to support that ideal life? How much time do you need away from day-to-day business to spend with your children? How soon do you want this life? These are measurable objectives – profit - time - asset value.

By quantifying your life challenge in business terms, you then create a framework that everyone can understand and contribute to. Of course, not everyone wants to know you plan to sell the business, for example, but you want the people around you to contribute to that goal. They only need to know the target.

Business growth for business sake is a far less powerful driver than goals linked to a happy ending.

For all intents and purposes, they are the same financial and quantitative targets you may see in any other business. However, they are entirely different, as the measures are derived from your personal life aspirations, not a ‘must grow for the sake of growth’ mentality. Consequently, they mean much more to you on a personal level.

If your life plan required you to make 25% net profit and you make 20%, your accountant may be delighted, but you should not be. Because you know you’re

behind the pace of the plan. That means arriving later, costing you that time with the family. You should not be satisfied and must double your efforts.

When you use a Future Statement, you know that achieving quantitative milestones means something much more than financial gain. It is a reality check, a benchmark against which you can test your decisions. If it does not contribute to the bigger picture, reject the idea.

As an entrepreneur, your challenge is to create the exact set of accounts needed to create your perfect life. As such, the Future Statement must still include financial measures of performance, what the business looks like at the end game. If not, your Future State will be built on wishful thinking, not financial foundations.

Without a life-led Future Statement, you may still arrive in a happy place in years to come (although, statistically, over half of business leaders do not). But, you have far more chance if you define your desired Future State and write down exactly what must happen to enable that perfect life.

### Time-based

A target without a deadline is just a dream.

Identify the month and year you want to reach this position in your life and business. It may be ten years down the line. But you must remember that aspiration every single day to stay focused on the Future State.

If you do not put a deadline in the Future Statement, you are not under pressure, you have less purpose, less drive, less focus. Your decisions are unchallenged as there is less urgency. Time makes you and your business, everyone in your business, accountable to each other. You know if you arrived when you said you would.

The cost of strategic drift is life and happiness, for you and your family. That understanding really focuses the mind, every day.

# Life Led Business

Copyright © 2020 Business Think Ltd

The right of Elliot Forte and Jonathan Sharp to be identified as the authors of this work has been asserted to them in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the Copyright owner.

ISBN: 9798673489727

Jacket by Business Think Ltd  
Cover image © Business Think Ltd

The "Business Think" trademark is the exclusive property of Business Think Limited.

Any reproduction, whether complete or partial, modification or use of the Intellectual Property, for whatever reason and in whatever medium, without our written, express and prior agreement is strictly prohibited.

Intellectual Property Office trademark UK00003054843  
HERMAN® reprinted with permission of Laughing Stock Licensing Inc.

John Tenniel's illustration The Mad Hatter Running is reprinted from Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (1865) and is out of copyright in the UK. Source: lewiscarrollssociety.org.uk. 17.03.16. The edited and abridged text of the Art of Money Getting by P.T. Barnum (1880) is in the public domain.

All copyrights are the property of their owners. Copyright infringement is not intended nor should be inferred.