



# **YOUR BUSINESS FOUNDATION**

BUILD THE FOUNDATION THAT **ALL**  
SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSES ARE BUILT ON



CHRISTOPHER BRIGGS

**Your  
Business  
Foundation**

**Christopher Briggs**

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*To Juliet, with love.*

*Thank you for your support, your belief in me  
and for your love.*

*To Catherine,*

*My lifeline when I needed one most.  
I'll never forget.*

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## Introduction

Let's get the bad news out of the way first - most businesses fail, everyday in their thousands. Ok, that's the bad news out of the way, now here is the good news – MOST BUSINESSES DON'T NEED TO FAIL.

To know if this is true (I'm assuming you're not going to just take my word for it) we need to understand *why* most businesses fail. If we know the reasons why then we're in a better position to avoid them and find a way to increase the chance of success. Before we do that, I'd like to pose some questions and ask you to imagine a different, new world, picture.

What if businesses didn't fail? What if the hundreds of thousands of businesses that have gone under over the years were still around and thriving today? How many more people would be employed? How much more tax revenue would governments acquire? How much less would these same governments have to spend on welfare? How much more wealth would be created? What new and innovative products and services could we be enjoying? How much more confident would people be to start their own business?

Imagine...instead of corporations everywhere, filled with older people, working out their retirement, doing the bare minimum and creating little that inspires, they left to start their own business and fulfil their lifetime dreams. The jobs they left behind would be filled with young, creative, energetic people who drove the companies forward, made a difference until they too were ready to start their own businesses. And of course, there are the young entrepreneurs who have a great idea and an infinite amount of energy and drive. Imagine them being able to build the empire they dream of without fear of failure holding them back. No one wants to see that energy and drive dampened.

How much better would things be if not just most businesses fulfilled their full potential, but also most not-for profit organisations like charities and public organisations like government councils?

Maybe this is all academic, a nice dream, because most businesses *do* fail and that's that. Or is it? Let's get back to the key question – *why* do most businesses fail?

Businesses fail for all sorts of reasons. Let me re-phrase that – business owners give many reasons for why their businesses fail. Running out of money is probably the most common answer. Then you have reasons such as a breakdown in the relationship between the founders, stress, too many hours for not enough return, the product wasn't good enough, the product was good enough but for some reason there weren't enough buyers and so on. But are these genuine reasons or are they excuses? Are there more fundamental causes? If there are and we can identify them, we might be able to prevent them.

I became rather obsessed with trying to find the answer to this question after my first business failed.

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In 2003 I'd had enough of corporate life. I worked for 20 years in the electronics industry, starting out as a designer of silicon chips. I moved companies and up ladders and in these final years was working for a Japanese semiconductor company. I spent a lot of my time in foreign countries, building global relationships, working on joint projects and winning multi-million hardware and software contracts.

I enjoyed much of my work, travelled to far-flung places, experienced different cultures and forged great friendships. But I was frustrated and I was tired of working for others and making them shed-loads of money. Creativity and innovation wasn't encouraged, new ideas not supported and petty rules enforced.

I wanted out and figured that I had enough knowledge and experience to do my own thing. But what should I do? What do I enjoy? What do I do well? I went through a real soul-searching phase and created lists of possible businesses to start, ranging from importing ceramics from Spain to creating a company that networked together small airfields for private jets and helicopters.

Then one day a good friend of mine told me about his frustrations and his idea for a business. It was (and still is) a great idea and I was hooked. In 2004, we founded our new software licensing company, I resigned from corporate life and I was free at last!

The months flashed by and during that time we got our messages together, a website, £500,000 worth of embedded software modules to license but no customers.

To our knowledge, no other company had done this before. Essentially, the business model was to take embedded software modules from companies who had developed them for their own high-tech products and license them to those who needed that same functionality. The revenue from licensing would be split between the software owners and us. Customers would be able to embed this module, like a USB driver, instead of creating it from scratch (because the USB function was the same regardless of the product, be it a camera or a printer or a DVD player) and focus their time and energy on creating differentiating features and the user level.

Even though this hadn't been done before we thought our idea was so brilliant that companies would come flocking to our door, crying out for our help and demanding to write cheques. We knew we could save technology product companies thousands of pounds in saved time, risk and cost and even though it was a brand new business model, surely, they

would see the benefit. So why weren't they buying and why aren't the distributors we've spoken to not chomping at the bit to sign us up as partners?

And we did make some sales. Our first one was unforgettable. The euphoria we felt - well, you never forget your first time. We'd created something out of nothing and made a first sale of £18,000. We'd done it! And yes, we made other sales, but not anything like as quickly as we'd thought and then there was the support our customers needed and problems to resolve.

Money was running out and at the end of 2008 and with the economic crash our bank pulled in its outstanding loans and that was the end of the company. I was unemployed and in debt.

It was the worst time to be unemployed. The economy had crashed and many thousands of experienced people were losing their jobs. Job vacancies were few and far between and any that came up had hundreds of people applying for them.

With the support of dear friends and some consultancy work, I managed to keep my head above water, hold onto my house and avoid bankruptcy. My life had stopped being a life and had become an existence.

I did my best to stop worrying during the alternate weekends I enjoyed with my daughter. But we no longer went out and did fun stuff and I couldn't hide the situation I was in. One Sunday afternoon, when my daughter Alex was 14, I was driving her home and she was excitedly talking about the holiday she was off on with her mother, stepfather and their kids. She loved to swim would spend hours snorkelling. I said she should buy a disposable waterproof camera at the airport and take pictures of the fish.

My wallet was in the glove box and I told her to take the £10 I had in it. She said she was ok and wouldn't take it. I tried to persuade her and reassure her that it was ok. Finally, with hesitation, she said, "No dad, you need it more than me." I tell you, it's hard to drive, with your face turned to the side, trying to hide the tears running down it.

I felt her hand on mine and heard this little shaky voice say, "Dad?" I turned to her and she too had tears streaking her face. I stopped the car and we hugged for what felt like ages. I was so ashamed of myself and so proud of her - it was one of those defining moments you never forget.

I'd hit rock bottom.

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During this existence I at first blamed the bank but as the anger subsided, I began to look to myself and ask where I'd gone wrong.

I knew there was nothing wrong with the business model in principle. We had over £500,000 worth of software modules from companies who backed the idea and many positive conversations with prospects.

Then one day I asked the right question and found out that software engineers didn't want to use a module from elsewhere because they hadn't written it so didn't know it and they also saw a risk to their own job.

CEOs and Financial Directors loved our value propositions centred around reducing cost and risk, around being able to launch their products on time and about focusing engineering on innovation instead of re-inventing the wheel. The position of the software engineers just didn't occur to us. We thought they'd actually want it too so that they could write more interesting software.

We overcame the concern about using software from elsewhere by creating a prototype software tool which could isolate a module from a larger system, detail its structure and connections and guide the software engineer on how to reconnect it to their system. I needed funding to commercialise it. And that was when the bank pulled the plug.

I looked hard at what had gone wrong. If only we'd realised the concern of engineers when we'd started. If only we'd thought of the tool and acquired funding for its development. If only we'd, started the framework of the business, the systems, conversations and all the other things a business needs to run in our spare time before leaving our jobs. If only we'd attracted more prospects quicker. If only...

I soul-searched and I realised that I couldn't blame the bank. We'd been excited about the opportunity, about leaving our jobs and we'd jumped in. And even if we'd got the engineers on our side, got the tool in place, what other unexpected obstacles would we have hit?

During this time I watched the news and saw almost daily announcements of large companies going under, many of which had been successful for decades. Suddenly, in boardrooms across the world, people were acting like rabbits in headlights, customers weren't buying, banks weren't lending, investments were disappearing – last one to leave turn out the lights. News reports were revealing that hundreds of small to medium sized businesses were closing every day.

What were their stories? The banking crisis was being blamed but I started to ask if that was the real reason. If you scrutinised these companies would you find reasons for their demise that had nothing to do with banks and the crash? Was the crisis simply the tipping point for their inevitable downfall?

Whilst keeping my head above water and applying for jobs, I resolved to try and find out if there were more fundamental reasons for why so many businesses failed and why others continued to thrive.

I researched and studied, tied-in my own 20+ years experience in corporate, my experience with my first venture and spoke with successful business owners, ex-colleagues and old customers. I identified many reasons given (my own included) for business failure and looked at what lay behind them – what would have caused that given reason? Then what lay behind that cause? And so on.

I built cause-and-effect paths and narrowed down all the reasons given, all the excuses, to just *two* fundamental reasons. Two reasons only from which many different scenarios could play out and result in business failure.

Having identified these reasons, I needed to know if it was possible to either eliminate them or reduce their likelihood to such a degree that they would impact few businesses rather than most businesses. What does a business need that would eliminate or reduce these ‘reasons’? What’s missing in those businesses that struggle and fail?

I finally found three vital elements that, if missing, would likely result in one or both of these reasons for business failure.

With 20 years in working for corporations I had knowledge and experience of these elements. I just hadn’t made the connections as to how vital all 3 were for success. In between job hunting and interviews, I filled in gaps with more research and conversations and created the bones of a system that would help business owners establish these elements in their business.

I’d applied for over 100 jobs, for which 100s of others also applied, and was interviewed for several. The last interview was for a USA start-up, which had done well, was ready to expand and needed someone to run the European office. I had a number of interviews over the telephone and was eventually asked to fly to Boston for a final round of interviews. I made the decision that this would be the last one. If I didn’t get this job I would focus on starting my new business.

I had 8 interviews over 8 hours and was then driven back to the airport for the flight back to London. The feedback was positive and no other names were in the frame. Then reasons were given for no decision being made and then nothing, quiet, no return of calls or replies emails. Finally I got the news that the company had been in talks with another company and was subsequently bought by this company, which had European offices and people to take up that position.

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I launched Anchorage Consulting in the autumn of 2009, put meat onto the bones of my system and won my first contract 3 months later and I haven't looked back.

Since then I've helped companies and organisations of all sizes and types, establish a foundation based on these elements or what I call, *fundamental building blocks*, in order to achieve their goals and enjoy long-term success. I've shown companies, from micro-level up to large corporations, how to set and achieve the right goals, colleges how to become less reliant on government funding and care providers how to increase the quality of care they provide. And now I want to help you establish the right foundation for your business or organisation.

Last year, I wrote a report called, *Why Most Businesses Fail*. In this report I take the reader through this logical progression that narrows down the reasons given for failure to the two fundamental reasons. In the report I then go on to reveal 3 fundamental elements or *building blocks* that, by their absence can cause the reasons for failure.

If you want to read this report, which includes exercises that you can apply to your own business and see if you reach the same conclusions, you can [download it here](#) or go to <http://www.yourbusinessfoundation.co.uk/why-businesses-fail-download/>.

Back to this book...In Chapter One I summarise the findings from this report and reveal these two reasons and the 3 fundamental building blocks that must be present as a foundation for a business in order to drastically reduce the chances of these reasons occurring and of the business becoming another 'failed business' statistic.

In parts One, Two and Three I describe each fundamental building block and explain why their presence is a must for business success. In Part 4 I bring it all together and give you some guidelines and tips on how to make your foundation work year-on-year so that you always set and achieve the right goals and steer your ship towards your vision.

From this book, you'll see why a strong business foundation is essential for long-term business success and how it will:

- Help you set the direction and stay on course;
- Increase productivity, revenue and motivation;
- Improve clarity and creativity;
- Reduce stress and wasted time and effort;
- Help you run your business and not have the business run you.

You will also see that this foundation is essential for businesses of all sizes. You will see that with a solid foundation supporting your business, you can not only survive in difficult times but actually thrive.

Throughout this book I talk mainly about businesses and companies when in fact I'm talking about any organisation that has targets to meet and provides some kind of product or service. If you run a not-for-profit charity, a council, a school or college, I'm also talking to you. You also have targets to meet, services to provide and budgets to work within - just like a business. In fact, I'll say this right now...if your organisation is not a business then you need to think of it as one and run it like it is. Do that, take on board what I'm going to tell you, and you will achieve your aims.

No more business failure.

## One

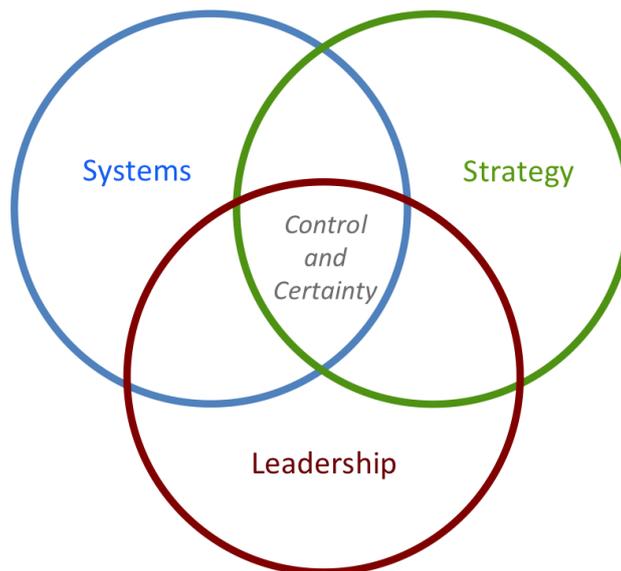
### Why Most Businesses Fail

I'm limited by Amazon rules as to how much of the Kindle book I can make as a free extract.

This chapter of the book essentially summarises my free report, [Why Most Businesses Fail](#). Instead of repeating it for the sample, and using up how much I can make available, please [download this report](#) and understand the argument fully.

In the free report and this chapter of the actual book, I conclude that a successful business or organisation has *certainty* and *control*. They have the certainty of knowing where they need to be and how to get there and they have the control to make it happen.

To establish those vital elements I argue that a business needs to be built on a foundation comprising 3 fundamental components - *Strategy, Leadership* and *Systems*.

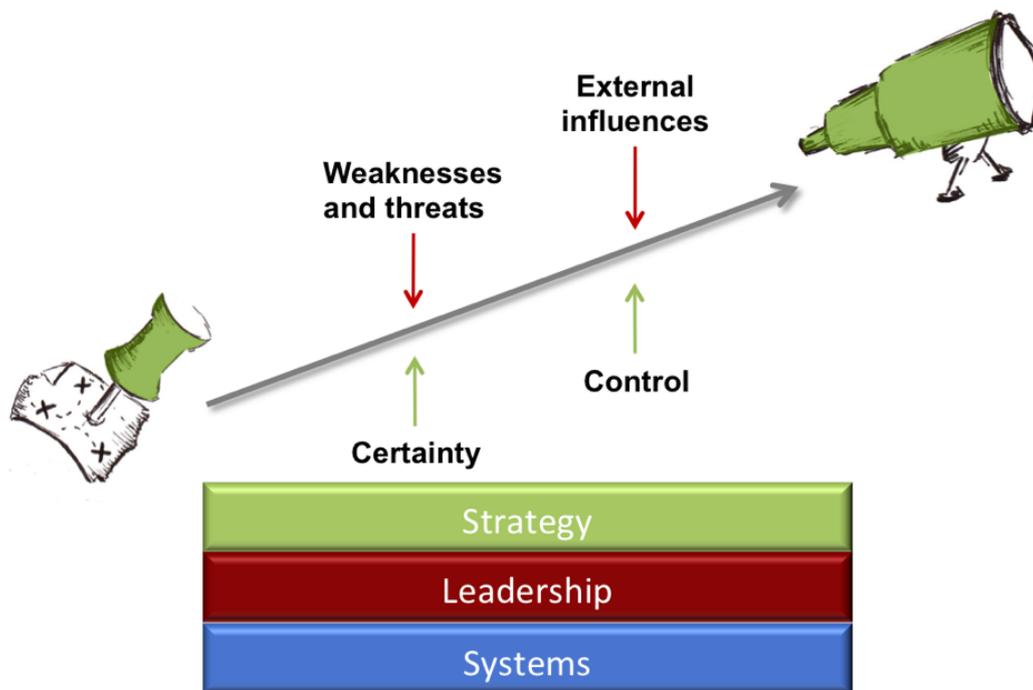


#### **Your Business Foundation**

Because these 3 components are fundamental to the long-term success of a company and because they form a strong base on which to build a business, I call them *fundamental building blocks*.

***Strategy, Leadership and Systems* are the fundamental building blocks of a strong foundation upon which successful businesses are built.**

If you pick any company that stands out, innovates and grows, even in tough economic times, you'll see a company that knows where it is, where it wants to be and has a strong strategy guiding the way. It'll have great leaders throughout all its levels and not just at the top and systems and processes that ensures it runs smoothly. You'll see a company built a *strong foundation* comprising these fundamental building blocks.



The *Strategy* building block comprises a system or framework for creating and implementing a coherent, balanced strategy plan. Without this building block, even the best CEO will struggle to steer a true course towards his vision.

The *Leadership* building block is essentially the leadership skills and attributes needed by you and your people in order to successfully create the right strategy plan, implement it and adapt if necessary to stay on course. Without this building block, a strategy plan will fail, milestones and targets will be missed and the supporting framework will fall apart.

The *Systems* building block must be in place and working in order for the other two blocks to work. Without this building block, leaders will not have the time and space to step back and create a good strategy nor check that it is working. They will not be able to maintain course nor correct deviations from it because they will be spending all their time in the business and reacting to it.

With these building blocks in place, a company knows what it needs to do and how to do it. It drives forward based on *certainty* and *control*. It knows the obstacles ahead and knows how to overcome them and stay on course. It knows what its customers need and how to deliver to meet that need. It works more effectively because it doesn't waste time, effort and money trying out something that *might* reap rewards. It's *strategic*. It achieves its aims because it is led and run by people with the right leadership qualities, who know how their efforts contribute to the success of the business and who work well together, with the help of efficient working systems and processes, to drive it forward.

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All 3 blocks are fundamental but I have to present them in some kind of order. In Part 1, I present the *Strategy* building block. It's first because it is the map that will guide you and dictate your actions and it is the block that, for me, lies at the core of your foundation.

We will look at what strategy is and isn't and how best to align it with how a business flows. I will then introduce the idea of creating a top-level strategy map to guide your way and how to break that down into a plan that connects where it is you want to be with where you are now.

You will see how to create a compelling vision and destination to aim for and keep you focused. You will learn how to assess where your business is now so that you can prepare for the journey ahead and you will learn how to create a path, with milestones, that will guide you there. Finally, I cover how to stay on the path and successfully implement your strategy.

In Part 2, I cover the *Systems* building block. This is a shorter section that will outline how to systemise your business by breaking it down into documented process flows. I put this building block next because first, it ties in with some aspects of strategy creation and implementation and second, it means we can then turn our attention away from what needs to be done to who is going to do it.

In Part 3, I move onto the *Leadership building block* and outline the key skills and attributes needed not just at the top to create the strategy, but also throughout the organisation in order to successfully execute it.

We will also look at a method for recruiting the best people and creating future leaders throughout so that, as far as possible, you can promote from within rather than hire from without.

Often the hardest part is overcoming the inertia to step away and begin. In Part 4 – *Making It Work*, I'll show you how to overcome that inertia by allocating time for building your foundation, building a core team if you have them and getting started.

You can of course, ignore this sequence and dive into whichever part best meets your current needs. For example, if you want to start getting your business systemised now then by all means jump to that part first.

Organisations, whatever their type and size, need a strong foundation to build on. They need a map to guide them and people to make it happen. And they need working systems to run efficiently so that those with the map can focus on it and stay on course.

So much has been written about these blocks separately but not about the need for *certainty* and *control* and how together these 3 building blocks give you just that and this vital foundation to build on.

My aim hasn't been to condense and repeat all that's been written but to highlight the key elements a solid foundation needs, how they work together and the steps you can take to build your own foundation.

I hope I succeeded and please...do let me know.

**PART ONE**

**STRATEGY BUILDING BLOCK**

## Two

### What Is Strategy?

The Oxford Dictionary defines the word 'strategy' as:

1. 'a plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim: *time to develop a coherent economic strategy*';
2. 'the art of planning and directing overall military operations and movements in a war or battle: he was a genius when it came to military strategy'.

*Dictionary.com* defines it as: 'a plan, method, or series of manoeuvres or stratagems for obtaining a specific goal or result: *a strategy for getting ahead in the world.*'

In a nutshell a strategy outlines how you intend to get from A, where you are now, to B, where you want to be in a specified time period. A strategy shows how you intend to overcome obstacles and external factors that will strive to throw you off course along the way.

Almost daily, we hear about 'strategies' that haven't gone according to plan like government strategies to improve the health system or the transport network, or military strategies to rid regions of terrorist groups, or business strategies to increase profit. They give 'strategy' a bad name and you may be justified in thinking that having a strategy is a waste of time.

A solid strategy that is well executed can make the difference between success and failure. When military and government initiatives fail, it's because the strategy was either poorly thought through or badly executed or both. For example, whilst I'm writing this, Britain is being battered by storms and much of the south and west of the country is flooded. When the Government talks of a strategy to combat this, what they really mean is that they're going to reactively try a series of tactics that will hopefully minimise the increasing toll of damage and misery. That's not a strategy. A strategy is proactive, planned thoroughly and not a reactive initiative thought through in days.

When a strategy works well its purpose is realised and things go according to plan. Should unforeseen events occur then a strategy adapts and is quickly realigned and off on track again. Whether going into space, building new aircraft, developing new products or producing a great movie, they all have one thing in common: a solid strategy and competent people.

A strategy will normally take the form of a plan, hence *strategy plan*, and is traditionally presented as a document that details what your aims are and how you will achieve them. For businesses that aim is essentially for its target customers to buy from it and not its competitors.

A strategy needs to be ‘well-balanced’ and ‘coherent’. A well-balanced plan is one that covers all areas of your business: sales, marketing, product development, operations, finance and so on. A plan that isn’t well balanced will focus only on certain areas of the business. The whole business then risks being warped out of shape as different areas move forward at different paces. For example, training a sales team to be more effective and to win more contracts could result in bottlenecks and strain in manufacturing that can’t keep up with the increased demand.

If it is to be coherent then all areas need to be in synch and aligned so that they are working together and driving forward in the same direction.

A good strategy plan is a living breathing entity that guides and adapts to keep the business on course.

Creating your strategy shouldn’t feel comfortable. If it does then it’s not ambitious enough and it’s going to do little to differentiate your business over your competitors. Your strategy shouldn’t state for sure what you know you can achieve it should reflect your burning desire to create something different, something that isn’t going to be easy to do and has no guarantee of being achieved, something that, *if* achieved, will be as a result of focus, drive and determination and courage.

## **What Strategy Is Not**

Having briefly defined and described what strategy is, it’s important to understand what it is not.

First, it’s not a crystal ball and it doesn’t guarantee success. Instead it makes success far more likely. As we’ve discussed, you cannot eliminate all uncertainty but a coherent strategy will eliminate as much uncertainty as possible.

Second, it’s not a planning exercise. A part of me is uncomfortable with using the words ‘plan’ and ‘planning’ as in ‘strategy plan’ and ‘strategic planning’. The words sound too sure and safe. They lack creativity. You’re not putting together a wardrobe according to a set of instructions; you’re creating a detailed map that will guide you and your business to the destination you have set.

A strategy plan is a document that details your strategy, broken down into steps and actions. Strategic planning is the process for creating the strategy and the plan. These are steps and processes but *not* the essence of what strategy is, which is to turn your purpose and vision into reality.

Third, a strategy (plan) is *not* a business plan. It is fundamentally different. A business plan will detail the financial numbers that you forecast, assumptions you have made to get

those numbers, the products and services that you intend to sell or how much, in order to achieve those numbers and the investments you will make in order to achieve your forecasts.

A business plan is a document of statements and, once written, is used to compare the financial results you forecast with the results you actually achieve. It shows *history*, it doesn't show why you might not be achieving the results you forecast or what to do to get back on course. It reports only what has already happened, your outcomes.

Having defined what a strategy is and is not, I want to describe it in ways that really highlight the far-reaching benefits that can come from having one.

## **Strategy Equals (Hard) Choices**

You cannot be everything to everyone and yet so many businesses try to be just that? Because their products can work in many different applications they try to fulfil all of them. The result is that they spread themselves too thin. They aren't able to establish a strong presence or reputation in any particular market segment or with any application type.

Just because your products can be used in a hundred different applications in many different markets doesn't mean you should try and sell to all of them. You need to decide who your ideal customers are, in which (very few) sectors and sell to them only.

I did some work with a company that developed products of a certain technology. The number of possible applications and market sectors was large and growing and the CEO would happily sell to all of them. He had hundreds of customers but they only bought tens or hundreds of products. He didn't understand how a rival company, who only sold to one or two markets and sold to far fewer customers, sold thousands of more products and generated far more revenue. He didn't understand that by selling to customers in many sectors he hadn't established a strong reputation in any particular market and hence didn't sell to any top players in any of them.

Geoffrey Moore in his classic book, *Crossing the Chasm* [\[1\]](#) describes the need for a start-up or small company to establish some ground in one sector, in a way that an invading force would establish a beachfront. From there, expand and build your presence in that one sector and when you have a large enough market share, then you can consider leaping to a neighbouring sector and start work to dominate that one.

Assuming that you don't have infinite resources (including money and time) you have to accept that you can't sell to everyone and that you have to make some hard decisions with regards to which sectors and customer-types you're going to focus on.

Strategy is about making choices. Who are your ideal customers? In which market sector(s) are they? What benefits will you deliver better than your competitors? As well as choosing what you will do, you also need to make the often-harder choice of what you won't

do. In order to go after a particular niche, what trade-offs must you make? Which prospects do you ignore?

IKEA founder Ingvar Kamprad, made a choice to offer well-designed furniture that almost anyone could afford but which still had a high quality look and feel. He decided to sacrifice many smaller outlets in favour of a few large out-of-town sites. He sacrificed having highly trained sales teams in favour of self-service. Instead of trying to please anyone looking to furnish their home, he narrowed down his product offering to a certain style and budget and hence a certain type of client.

All highly successful companies are those, which don't try to cater for everyone but instead focus on a niche and drive to dominate it. That way you don't have to compete on price and, possibly at the risk of missing out on some short-term revenue gains, you don't lose out in long-term profitability, you don't risk losing your ideal customers and you don't lose your way.

Those that lack a solid strategy lack certainty in their purpose and direction, in what makes them different. As such, they're unable to make these hard choices. They see a rival introduce a new product feature or service and they panic that this will give that rival an advantage that could take market share and customers away from them. So, they divert from their course and sometime later (months or years) they too offer the same product features or service.

The result is that over time, competitors in a sector end up looking like each other. In their paranoia they emulate each other and eventually become just like each other. With nothing to differentiate between them, these companies end up competing on price alone.

Companies, such as supermarkets or consumer product manufacturers, perform very well competing on price because they sell lots of stuff in huge volumes. But they have to because profit margins are so low. Electronic component distribution for example, has seen its profit margin erode dramatically over the last twenty years and global distributors achieve net profits of around 2 to 3 percent only.

A good strategy, will give you the certainty and conviction to stay on the path you've set, to focus on meeting the needs of your specific, ideal clients and to not panic and react to something a rival does.

## **Strategy Equals Motion**

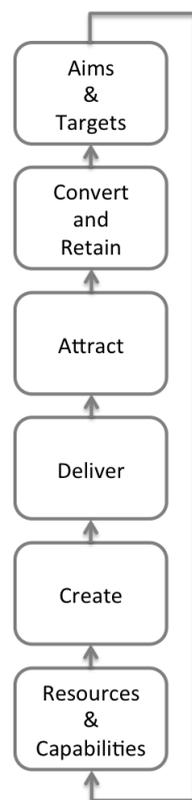
When the parts of a larger entity work well together there is a flow to it. The organs in your body working together to keep you alive, the elements of an engine that create drive and thrust, the individual musicians playing together in an orchestra. Processes run throughout and the whole can be broken down into cause and effect stages. Your lungs

expand, take in air and oxygen from it is absorbed into the blood heading for your heart, which then pumps it and the oxygen around your body. Something happens which causes something else to happen and so on. It's a series of cause and effect stages. It's a system.

A good business also has a flow to it. Take a technology company like Apple or Sonos. They seemingly effortlessly attract new prospects and convert into customers. They launch new products that attract and convert more paying customers. The products are beautifully designed, manufactured and packaged. They're delivered on time, easy to set up and they work. It all seems to flow from one stage to the next like an efficient system.

A business is a system that flows from one cause and effect stage to the next. Get this right and your business will naturally flow through key stages and your aims will be realised. A good strategy will guide you through this flow and show you what to do at each stage.

This image shows how a business can flow. I've broken down this flow into 6 key stages. You can have more or fewer stages as best suits your business.



### ***Aims and Targets***

At the top of the flow there are your targets or aims. For a private business, that aim or those targets will usually be financial. For a public organisation, a college or a not-for-profit organisation like a charity, this aim could be their mission. Let's stick with private companies.

### ***Convert and Retain***

To hit your financial targets you have to convert prospects into paying customers. Having met their needs you then want to make sure that you keep them.

### ***Attract***

To convert ideal prospects to paying customers you need to identify and attract them.

### ***Deliver***

To attract and convert prospects you need to be able to deliver what you've promised. However you do this the experience must be right first time. Loyal customers are far more forgiving if things do wrong. A first-time customer is far less so.

### ***Create***

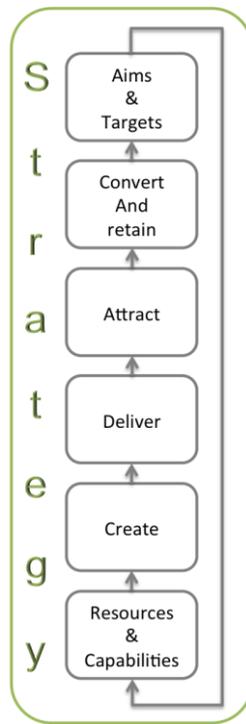
Of course, you need something to deliver and so you need to create this value that you want customers to pay for. Again, in this noisy world we live in, unless you're simply competing on price, you need to create something that not just meets the needs of your customer but meets it better than your competitors. It needs to be innovative.

### ***Resources and Capabilities***

In order to create this value you need to have the necessary resources and capabilities. You'll need to have tangible assets such as money, property, equipment and people. And intangible assets, such as expertise, partners, relationships, a brand, your reputation, systems and processes, skills and attributes.

As you see from the diagram, the cause and effect flow is closed as money from the revenue created is fed back into the resources and capabilities so that better products and services can be created and delivered and more customers attracted and converted.

This is essentially how a business flows and your strategy is the guide that shows how to make this flow work.



From high-level, you should see a flow within an organisation; streams of systems that join to form a river, which will reach its destination and which will overcome any obstacles along the way.

A strategy plan document doesn't easily portray this big picture flow. It doesn't convey the way a strategy flows through an organisation, connects the stages and aligns it so that all areas work together. Nor does it convey that beauty that a differentiating strategy can have.

A big picture can bring together the whole strategy under which your detailed strategy plan will sit. It is a powerful way to keep you focused on your priorities, keep you on course and it provides a visually powerful and engaging way to communicate your strategy to your people and external stakeholders.

One way of showing this big picture is in the form of a strategy map. It can be a visual map that brings all the key pieces together.

I hope you now see why building your business or organisation on a strong foundation made up of the three building blocks *Systems, Strategy* and *Leadership* is absolutely vital for success.

You should also see how a business flows from one cause and effect stage to the next. And how that flow can be translated into a map that can guide you from where you are now to where you want to be.

In the next chapters of the book I show you how to create a one-page strategy map that will guide you from a high level and keep you focused. I then take you through the steps to creating the right strategy, from your vision to strategic destination and priorities to the focused actions to take.

I then show you how to create the right systems and processes that will allow you as a leader to step away from your business, create and implement the right strategy and keep your ship on course.

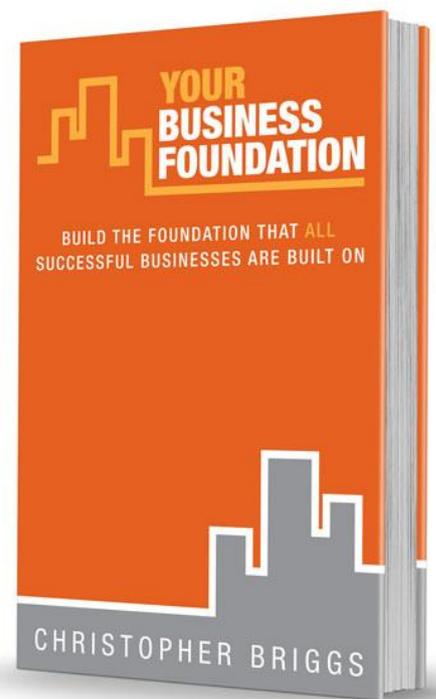
Next I'll take you through the key leadership skills and attributes needed to create and implement your strategy and, build relationships, inspire others motivate your people if you have them and more. We'll also look at how to bring out the leaders in your people if you have them, so you can focus on growing your business and not managing your team.

And finally, I show you how to make it happen. It's no good learning the theory and then doing nothing with it. I'll take you through the steps to get you started and get your foundation built.

Supported by the right systems and by being the leader you need to be, you can create and implement the right strategy your business needs to reach its full potential and achieve long-term success.

The complete book is available on Amazon in Kindle format for the price of only a couple of coffees.

[Buy the book now.](#)



## Notes

[1] Geoffrey A. Moore, *Crossing The Chasm*, (Harper Business, 1999)

[2] Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton, *Strategy Maps*, (Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2004).

[3] Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton, *Strategy Maps*, (Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2004).

[4] Cynthia A. Montgomery, *The Strategist*, (London: Collins, 2013), pp. 97-102.