

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **GOALS AND VALUES OF YOUR BUSINESS**

I recommend that every business should adopt four (4) goals. These are:

1. To have satisfied customers.
2. To be competent and professional.
3. To be one of the leading players in your area of business.
4. To contribute positively to communities you operate in.

These goals should lead a business to answer questions that determine the values of how to run the business. The values need to be driven towards goal fulfilment and they require the following tools to be adopted:

#### **SATISFIED CUSTOMERS**

To have satisfied customers, a business should value communication and helpfulness. One's team should communicate friendliness by warmly welcoming customers at all times; listening more in order to correctly establish their needs, and fulfilling their purpose of visit to your business.

Being flexible to the ever changing needs, considering convenience for your customers and giving functional advice is very helpful too and results in customers who are satisfied.

#### ***How to Communicate and be Helpful to Customers***

##### **Communication**

- a) Be welcoming to customers at all times; whether they pop into your premises, call to make an enquiry or simply visit your website. You achieve this by attending to them without delay. When customers enter your establishment, relieve them of loads they may be carrying (umbrellas, shopping bags, coats, etc.) and place them in safe custody and usher

them to a comfortable waiting seat.

The phone must never ring the second time before answering. Anyone who cannot assist must never pick up the phone. Make sure you take a detailed message which must immediately reach the relevant person. Follow up with this person to make sure they respond back to the customer. For this purpose, a “Goal-Steering Book” can be kept at Reception. (Never trust your memory).

- b) Encourage customers to talk and explain their needs; do not interrupt them or assume that you know their specific requirements. Re-iterate your understanding of their current needs before carrying out any due process.
- c) Make customers happy that they chose to visit your business. Fulfil them by giving them creative solutions like a stunning hairstyle when visiting your hair salon, an end to a legal problem at your law practice, the end of a medical problem at your rooms or good value purchases at your superette or *spaza*. Give them the feeling they received so much for so little i.e. deliver value.

Good communication means: never argue with any customer, even if you may believe they are wrong. It is helpful to nod in agreement, but politely suggest that in your experience your solution has borne fruit. When there is criticism or complaints against your business, be calm and do something about this urgently.

### **Helpfulness**

- a) Be flexible to change. Offer customers varieties of products, services, styles, lead times and accessibility.
- b) Build convenience for the customer. Where they cannot make appointments, offer stand-by or walk-in service. Where feasible, adjust your hours and days of operation e.g. very early in the morning, evenings, Sundays or Public holidays.

- c) Advise customers about future control of current problems or concerns. Counsel them where practical. Leave out the jargon (technical, legal or medical) and explain in simple language.

### COMPETENCY AND PROFESSIONALISM

The value of quality and professionalism cannot be overemphasized. The business should have and apply the skill that enables it to: Consistently produce quality results; deliver this “first-time-every-time”, and pay attention to detail. Professionalism means that one should practise professional ethics. Ethical behaviour include, good grooming, being a team-player, being reliable, and having integrity and being committed.

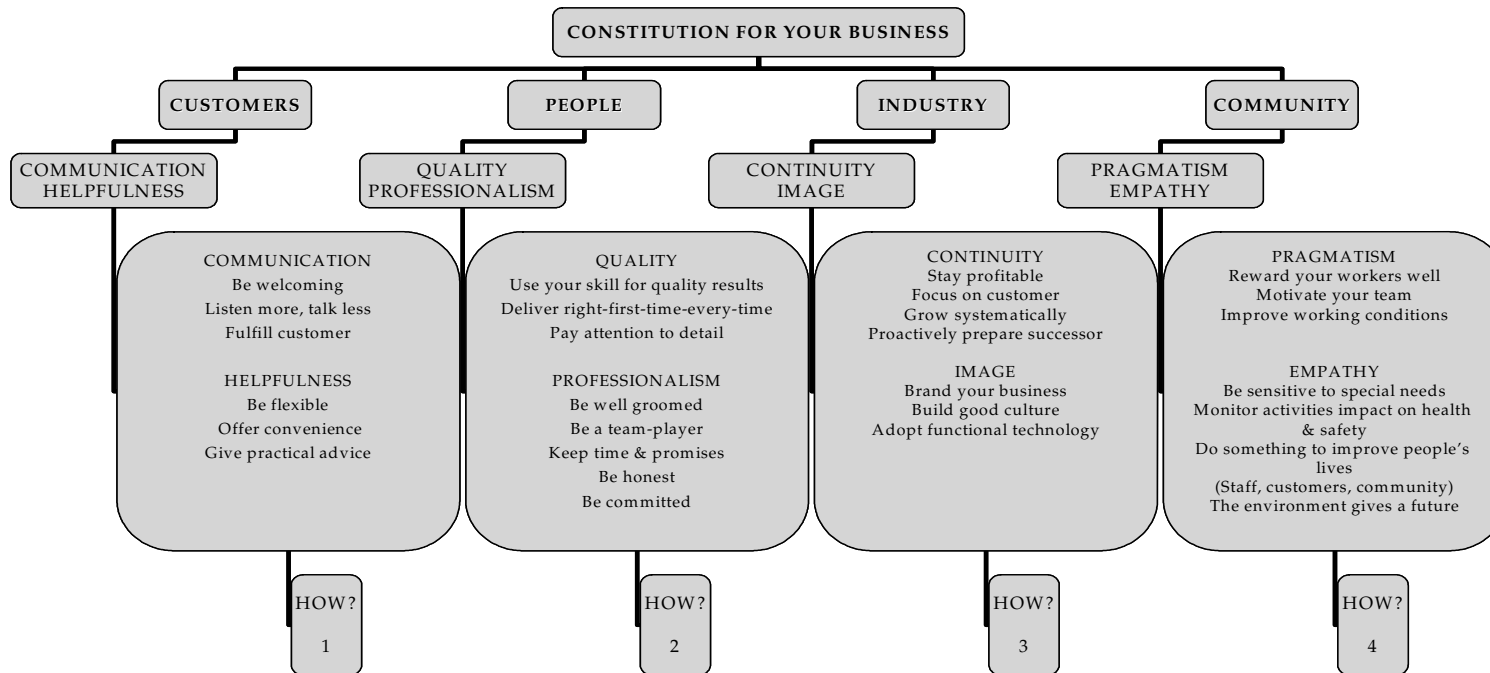
#### *How to achieve and maintain Quality and Professionalism*

##### **Quality**

- a) Make sure the skills-base in your business produce quality or “zero-defect” products and services. Also make sure that these are delivered “first-time-every-time” to the customer. No wastage or damages. No returns.
- b) Pay attention to detail. Go beyond the specification if you have to; if it makes the customer happy and it’s within the budget.

##### **Professionalism (Professional Ethics)**

- a) You must present a professional image of good personal hygiene and grooming all the time.



- b) Maintain a good climate for everyone to thrive and work as a team. Eliminate gossip.
- c) You and your team must be reliable enough to keep time and honour appointments and promises (and guarantees).
- d) Be trustworthy. Customers must never have reason to suspect that their belongings (cellphones, handbags, etc.) entrusted to your care will disappear. That the database you build is confidential. That their secrets are safe with you. Or even that their credit card purchases inside your shop or website are transparent and safe.
- e) Be enthusiastic and committed. Pay attention to detail. Be consistent with your solutions.

#### AN IMPORTANT PLAYER

If one wants to be a leading player, one should value continuity and good image. This means that the business has to grow beyond survivalist status and it should be focused on customer-care. It has to spread over a wider area and as the captain; you should groom a successor in advance.

To stand out in a crowd, the business has to have a good image. This can be done through, branding your business and its products and services, building a culture of good governance and adopting technology that enhances customer satisfaction.

#### *How to be a Force in Your Industry*

##### **Continuity**

- a) If you cannot be profitable, you'll soon disappear from the business landscape. Therefore, make sure you continue to grow your profits.
- b) Always stay focused on the customer as you grow. Grow systematically. Make sure you adjust your capacity to service existing and prospective customers accordingly.

Avoid customer frustrations that they cannot access your products and services because you are too localized.

- c) From day 1 of operations, develop a succession plan. Induct your successors (be they relatives or not) and let them learn from the bottom up in order to fully understand your business.

### **Image**

- a) Distinguish yourself from the crowd by “branding” your business and its products and services. This you can achieve or maintain through consistent use of appealing logos, colours, tasteful décor, unique style, goal-orientated training, uniform operational procedures, corporate wear/uniforms, or combinations of these, etc.
- b) Build a culture of good governance in your business. Be transparent and you will also attract investors to grow your business further.
- c) Employ functional technology that facilitates good customer care. Remember that “e-business” is not the preserve of the bigger boys only; but where it’s cost-effective and can increase customer satisfaction, do adopt it. For example: when your customer requires a payment history, the technology should provide that at the touch of the button.

### **A POSITIVE IMPACT**

Lastly, to impact positively on the community it operates in; a business should be pragmatic and have empathy. This can be achieved if one reward the team of employees well, develops them to be a motivated and productive labour force, and strive to continually improve their working conditions. That is the pragmatic side.

Empathy (*Ubuntu*), which is a basic human instinct, is nurtured by being sensitive to special needs of individuals, women as well as physically-challenged employees. You could

also ensure that the activities of your business do not affect the health of workers or threaten their safety. Being proactive to social challenges facing communities where your employees and customers come from, and saving the environment from dumping of poisonous waste, could result in your business getting immense recognition by the community.

*How to be in touch with the Community you operate in*

**Pragmatism**

- a) People are your most important resource and should be cared for well. Reward them well. Make sure they enjoy quality time with their families by eliminating unnecessary overtime. Do acknowledge that an employee has a life outside your business which will have a bearing on the business relationship.
- b) You get the best from a team of motivated workers. Therefore, do continually build a good incentive plan that encourages the individual to perform and strengthen the team. Continually audit your skills base and run the necessary training for your employees to gain confidence in delivering value and maintain customer satisfaction. Put newcomers to your business through a goal-orientated induction training.
- c) Review working conditions of your employees periodically. Ensure that you streamline working places in a manner that promotes teamwork, privacy and safety. Encourage multi-skilling.

**Empathy**

- a) Be especially sensitive to special needs of women employees. They are mothers and a woman has also mothered you. But still, do be equitable. Those who are physically-challenged also require special understanding but not spoon-feeding.
- b) The activities of the business should also not affect the health

of workers. Put safety ahead of profit, where applicable.

- c) Besides your employees, your customers would most probably also come from the same community you operate in. (Not unless your business goes beyond the borders stretched by “e-business”). You could add value to this community by proactively contributing time and resources to address challenges such as the scourge of HIV/AIDS, lack of skills, joblessness and poverty.
- d) The environment has also become a prime concern. Therefore, firstly; make sure your business does not dump deadly poisons or carcinogens into the already compromised environment. Then do promote recycling within all levels of your operation. Paper, oil from vehicles, water from cooling processes, etc. are such examples.

<b>TABLE 1: Goals and Values</b>			
<i>“Goals” answer the question “Why you run this business”.</i>			
<i>“Values” tell “How you want to run this business”.</i>			
<i>“Goal Fulfilment” means “When you achieve these goals”.</i>			
<b>EVIDENCE</b>	<b>SUGGESTS</b>	<b>VALUES Violated</b>	<b>CURE</b>
<b>GOAL # 1 : TO HAVE SATISFIED CUSTOMERS</b>			
<p>Clients frustrated how you consult them or how your business handles complaints,</p> <p>or</p> <p>Customers are regarded as “a pain in the nose” in your business</p>	<p>Un-friendliness &amp;</p> <p>Not listening to client needs</p>	<p>COMMUNICA-TION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcoming atmosphere. New client-care system: record complaints in book near phone, refer to relevant person, and review weekly. Update client periodically</li> <li>• Talk less and listen more about what customers desire to change.</li> </ul>



<p>Customers unhappy with outcome or purchases</p>	<p>Unfulfilled expectations</p>		<p>Give free service or exchange goods for free. Assess whether staff member concerned has required skill or goods defective from supplier</p>
<p>Little variety of products available; inflexible lead times,  or  Your customers regularly find your business closed when they have the time to visit  Clients are uncertain about benefits, rights or guarantees; how to operate products, when their next visit is and for what purpose, duration of offers, etc</p>	<p>Inflexibility  In-convenience  Inability to advise (Mixed signals. Ignorant customers)</p>	<p>HELPFULNESS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand product range to complement existing range. Be more creative (R&amp;D). Continuously improve your lead times.</li> <li>• Extend your hours and improve accessibility to your customers</li> <li>• Empower your staff with knowledge that works well for clients. New persons to be exposed to company expectations training (Induction)</li> </ul>

<b>GOAL # 2 : TO BE COMPETENT AND PROFESSIONAL</b>			
Many clients return goods to store or complain about poor services done e.g. car service, bad hairstyle, lousy building alteration or plumbing, late-coming at funeral, etc	Incompetence: Return products, and Poor Service	ZERO DEFECT QUALITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess technical and customer-care skill of your operators or mechanics or technicians or sales team and conduct urgent on-the-job-training.</li> <li>• Explain your quest for “Zero Defect” approaches (1st time every time).</li> <li>• Give motivational talk to boost confidence</li> <li>• Hire better highly-skilled persons</li> </ul>
Customers are pressurized to hurry and settle bills towards <i>tshail</i> (knocking-off time), or AWOL or persistent late-coming to work, or Substance abuse and drinking-on-the-job, or Non-co-operation on safety and work procedures, or	Unprofessional behaviour	ETHICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-train your staff on Vision and Mission (Goals and values)</li> <li>• Give written warnings and fire those concerned</li> <li>• Use professional selection and hiring process to appoint new ethical people</li> </ul>

Not caring for assets of the company: e.g. Abuse of cars, phones, email (internet) facilities and other company property			
Clients overcharged, or their change withheld, or their belongings disappear	Untrust worthiness	HONESTY or INTEGRITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-train your staff on Vision and Mission</li> <li>• Give written warnings and fire those concerned</li> </ul>
Staff always dumping tools because the clock say so; even when it's occasionally obvious that a bit of overtime would improve production and delivery	Clock-Watching	DEDICATION or COMMITMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-train your staff on Vision and Mission</li> </ul>
<b>GOAL # 3: TO BECOME A LEADING PLAYER IN THIS INDUSTRY IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD</b>			
Despite so much activity, the business struggles to make ends meet (e.g. staff and / or suppliers paid late), or	Poor profits: survivalist mode	CONTINUITY (STAYING POWER)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review costing and margins</li> <li>• Investigate cost-cutting possibilities throughout</li> <li>• Improve your customer care and see sales also improve.</li> <li>• Get more done in shorter time (improve</li> </ul>

<p>Clients frustrated that your products are scarce or there are too few outlets where they are available</p>	<p>Poor market penetration</p>		<p>productivity).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do urgent promotion of your products and services over a wider area</li> <li>• Sign up active distributors or stockists and give them incentives for their trouble</li> </ul>
<p>No business-name, no logo, no organised presentation or colour-scheme, or  No operational decisions are taken when the owner is unavailable or  Everyone follows any system in your business</p>	<p>Poor Image and no brand   Not delegating or poor management succession plan   Business lacks your rubber-stamp. Poor corporate culture.</p>	<p>IMAGE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brand the business: Put up a sign with the business name, logo and corporate colours</li> <li>• Communicate brand-building behaviour and actions within your business</li> <li>• Implement a management training and succession plan from the onset.</li> </ul> <p>Prepare an Operations Manual and put your staff through necessary training to make sure that “all ships sail in the right direction”</p>

<b>GOAL # 4 : TO HAVE POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON COMMUNITIES WHERE YOU OPERATE</b>			
<p>Regular waste of time, materials, resources and productivity</p> <p>Staff (especially new) show lack of confidence in closing sales and their care of the customer is clumsy or reckless</p> <p>High staff turnover , or Restless staff</p>	<p>Poor productivity</p> <p>Unsatisfactory working conditions and/or remuneration</p>	<p>PRAGMATISM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measure scale of waste and reduction in quality units of products produced or volume of work done per time period</li> <li>• Take staff in affected section through second induction and motivational talk</li> <li>• Take staff in affected areas (or newcomers) through an induction training, where customer care is emphasized</li> <li>• Urgently review situation of pay, leave, overtime, quality time staff spends with their families</li> </ul>
<p>Unwelcoming attitudes to women and or physically-challenged colleagues or customers</p> <p>Frequent on-the-job-accidents or</p>	<p>Poor safety culture</p>	<p>EMPATHY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unsafe conditions. Engage</li> </ul>

employees getting sick on the job	(Occupational hazards)		employees in good safety attitudes
Depressed or poor neighbourhood where your employees and customers come from	Neglect		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve your business in self-improvement programmes in local communities</li> <li>• Adopt an HIV/AIDS plan to educate, treat and reduce threat to staff productivity and customer use of you products and services</li> <li>• Support good causes in the community</li> <li>• Adopt good waste disposal practice for your industry</li> <li>• Recycle wherever possible (any effort no matter how small, is worth it)</li> </ul>
Dumping	Environmental irresponsibility		
Environmental disasters			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blow the whistle on perpetrators</li> </ul>

## GOAL FULFILMENT

It is very important to define your "Goal Fulfilment" which explains when you achieve these goals. For examples:

- ✓ "When buyers in the 20 local retail stores (say: within a 20km radius) show preference for our products over the

competition". (This could sometimes be measured in quantities of products shipped out or revenue generated over a certain period in a measurable area). This is achievable in the medium term.

- ✓ "When my great grand children grow the company beyond the equator". In this case your goal could possibly be achieved posthumously. That means you are in it for the long haul.

The four goals are all important but they become more so when goal number one, "to have satisfied customers" becomes "the sun of the solar system" and everything revolves around it. Satisfied customers tend to take little more to please, they visit frequently and spend more with each visit and they also tell good things about you to their families, friends and associates. The net result would be phenomenal profit and growth and your initial worry about "opportunity costs" fast become a faint memory.

When formulating your goals and values, take care to first look at the "pie-in-the-sky" scenario; that is the ideal. Then you can choose the necessary tools and resources to begin the process towards crystallizing the pie and displacing the illusion. Therefore, any factor that has an adverse effect on these adopted values must be eliminated or dealt with mercilessly.

### ASSESSING PROGRESS

The monitoring and management of your goals and values will decide when and how much profit you make. The more components of the values and "tools" you break down and monitor, the more information you will gather and have to react to. Your profit will continue to roll in and your goal fulfilment brought forward.

It is not enough to fulfil goals posthumously. Interim results are needed to assess progress towards goal fulfilment. It is

human nature to want to achieve things “yesterday”. However, usually twelve (12) months activities need be consolidated and reported upon. So this would be the opportunity to evaluate whether the “opportunity costs” or 8% interest the bank offers for “detaining” your money for the twelve months is better than your commitment in your own business. You may take note that listed companies prefer to produce quarterly results in order to inform their shareholders of progress in the value of their investment.

When you start your business you are rich in hope, enthusiasm and most probably you have good reserves. How are you supposed to feel when the disappointment hits you? Do not grab the nearest noose, run to a tree and hang yourself. Remember you are not the first nor will you be the last to fail. Look at the experience and declare yourself guilty of what went wrong. Then decide what to avoid in the future in similar circumstances. Review your goals and re-define the values, almost like you would steer a car back onto the straight because you had momentarily looked away.

Of course, it is easier said than done. There is no such thing as smooth sailing in everybody’s life. We are all destined to be frustrated during our lifetimes. Someone you love may die or be crippled; your business may fail or your son may become a violent gangster and your daughter may become the lady of the night. Therefore, at one time or other frustration will creep into our lives surreptitiously.

There are times one gives up too easily or too early. I believe that we can take solace when looking back at the odds one has already overcome since birth and draw inspiration, take a fresh breath and continue to fight. Save your energy and do not cry over spilt milk. Once again an updated good business-plan would most probably forecast your problem and help you steer clear of titanic icebergs.



### ***The School Teacher who gave up***

*I read in the Sowetan newspaper about 5 years ago of a young schoolteacher who had been working without pay of several months. I remembered my father, now a retired school principal, who during the mid-1960s changed schools twice and each time he had to wait for over 6 months before receiving his first pay (as a newcomer). Then there were three of us older siblings at Pax Institution and the fees had to be up-to-date or we could be sent home. We knew of the situation although we could not relate to the problem, but my father never over-played the stress; so it did not show.*

*Apparently the last straw with the young Gauteng teacher, reported in the Sowetan, was when he received a cheque of about R700.00 (for about 6 month's work – he must have thought). He broke down and took his own life that day. When the real big cheque of many thousands arrived by post the next Monday, the poor chap was a stiff in the morgue. The small cheque of R700.00 that invoked the noose was making up for an under-payment on a bigger one; it had overtaken the real big cheque in the mail and arrived first.*

## PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships and friendships are very demanding on your time and emotions. There is a general belief that it's easier to start your own business whilst you are still single than when you are married. I do believe that there is some truth in this; but there is also merit in sharing your frustrations and triumphs with a dearly beloved one.

If you were the type with many friends, it would help to trim numbers as well as their frequent visits. Your new circle of friends would now be your business because traditional friends are a distraction. Anyway they would not hang around longer when they find your business is not doing too well. You will also increasingly find it difficult to honour commitments away from your business; as such you may as well trim down lousy friendships.

### ***Abused by my "friend"***

*I remember an associate who used to want to change his cheque frequently at our tills at the weekend. Once you had handed him the cash, you would then find that his cheque was post-dated. The final straw came when I found out that he had done this by as much as six weeks. This is not fair considering that this sort of arrangement was not discussed beforehand. Good friends should not abuse you and they must respect your work or business.*

I find it easier to follow three personal "lifelong" goals to give me joy, peace and purpose:

- a) To make my wife and family happy.
- b) To make people happy.
- c) To contribute to people's quality of life.

My "softie-softie" approach will put a stone in some people's shoes. This could be from the generally held belief that you can succeed in business only if you act tough. When looking back over my life, I am happy with my approach. After all, many so-called economic successes have often been achieved through brutality and other women and human rights violations.

New situations would require new interpretations of my personal goals. My choice of action will be motivated by: "Will my wife be happy?", "Will my family be happy? Or "Does it add value to people's lives?"

## DISCIPLINE

As with your conscious management of relationships with family and friends, discipline would always be the catchword in business life. Much has been written and taught about time and its management. Time is always the most important resource common to all activities and business and it remains relevant

today.

Budgetary discipline is also very important and where the goals and values have meaning in your business, such should be easy to achieve.

