

First Steps Action Guide to Improving Your Solo Business

Stop the Overwhelm. Grow Your Business and Regain Your Life. Change Begins Here.



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Your Secret Weapon

So, You Are a Solopreneur!

Congratulations! You can count yourself among the most courageous, hardest working business owners in our society. You have chosen to take risks that others would never attempt.

And you likely have very personal reasons for this choice. You may be uber-passionate about the product or service you provide. Or you may be determined to live life on your own terms, working from where and when you choose.

Whatever brought you to the life of the Solopreneur, you have learned it comes with its own set of rewards and challenges.

This Action Guide is here for you to begin the first step in making your business more profitable, less cumbersome, and more rewarding while bringing you greater life balance and freedom to design the lifestyle you choose. Work through this Guide at your own pace. It will not be done in one sitting. To get the most out of it, use it when you have a moment of quiet to contemplate each step and give it meaningful thought. You may find it helpful to print it out, or dedicate a journal to keep your notes.

Let's get started!

Step 1:

You cannot measure progress without first measuring your baseline. We will start by taking an inventory of the various parts of your business as they are today. Use the chart on the next page to rate your current business. You will see that the chart has 10 columns but only 9 are labelled.

Column number 10 has been left blank so that you may insert anything that hasn't yet been included. Give it your own label. Make another column if you'd like. This is your document - make it work for your situation.

Guide to chart terms:

Office/Space - refers to the physical space you work in. Do you have a home office? Desk elsewhere? Storage?

Systems - refer to a wide variety of possible systems that help you run your business. Payment systems, schedulers, accounting/bookkeeping systems, filing, etc.

Marketing - what are you doing for marketing? How do you rate your current plan?

Customer Relations - How do you communicate with customers, offer support, keep in contact.

Leadership - as a solopreneur, this is all about YOU! How do you rate yourself as a leader? Are there areas about your leadership abilities that you would like to improve?

Sales - How many of your leads actually convert to sales?

Support - As a solopreneur you have no employees but you may need the support of others. Do you use contractors? Are you making use of support from outside sources in an effective way to delegate tasks appropriately?

Work/Life Balance - Are you in charge of how much time you spend on your business or does your business run you? Are you making time for family, health, hobbies, etc.?

Income - How are you feeling about your current level of business income?

Your Choice - use the last column to rate any part of your business you would like to work on that wasn't included.

Below you will see a chart indicating various parts of your business. On a scale from 1-10 (1 designating "this part of my business is terrible!" and 10 designating "this part of my business is as great as I could imagine!") please rate each pillar and draw a corresponding line to indicate where you are right now at this time.

Pillars of Your Balanced Solo Business

Office/ Space	System s	Marketin g	Customer Relations	Leadership	Sales	Support	Work/Life Balance	Income	

Write a number 1-10 in the top of each column to indicate how you would rate yourself today.

Step 2:

You will now write a description of what each numeric value reflects to you. For instance, if you gave your business a “7” for Office/Space you might write something like, “my office is in my home and while I have plenty of space and good furniture, I am not organized and it is messy. It is also loud when my kids are home so I gave it a 7”.

Your statement need not be lengthy but make it meaningful to you.

1. Office/Space Value_____

Description:

2. Systems Value_____

Description:

3. Marketing Value_____

Description:

4. Customer Relations Value_____

Description:

5. Leadership Value_____

Description:

6. Sales Value_____

Description:

7. Support Value_____

Description:

8. Work/Life Balance Value_____

Description:

9. Income Value_____

Description:

10. Value_____

Description:

Step 3:

Now comes the fun step. You will now revisit each of the 10 areas of your business which you rated above. However, this time, you will be writing a statement about your 100% Perfect Situation! For each of the 10 areas, imagine what they would look like if they were absolutely fantastic. This is your chance to think big. Fill in as much detail as you would like. For instance, a statement for a “10” in Office/Space might look something like “I have achieved location independence working from my laptop as I travel the world. My current view is of the ocean from a beautiful beach in Thailand. My rented bungalow is equipped with internet and has easy access to everything I need to do my work. I have digitized all my documents to be completely mobile”. Make it your own!

1. Office/Space Value_10____

Description:

2. Systems Value__10____

Description:

3. Marketing Value_10____

Description:

4. Customer Relations Value_10____

Description:

5. Leadership Value_10____

Description:

6. Sales Value__10__

Description:

7. Support Value__10__

Description:

8. Work/Life Balance Value__10__

Description:

9. Income Value__10__

Description:

10. Value__10__

Description:

Step 4:

Congratulations! By completing Step 3, you have written a description of your business and life goals for your ideal future. You may reference your writing as you progress and see how close you are bringing your image into reality.

We know from social science, however, that the best way to make progress is to focus only a few changes at a time.

In this step, please look back at your 10 Pillars.

As you look, think about **one** or maybe **two** pillars in which you would like to implement your first changes.

You might choose one pillar because it is low hanging fruit with easily achievable goals. This can be a great way to start and gain energy and optimism to move towards others in the future.

Alternatively, you may choose a pillar that you predict will make a big impact on the improvements you will experience.

It is up to you. Once you have chosen one or two areas, write them here below:

I choose to begin working to improve my business by focussing first on

Step 5:

Look at the value you gave in Step 1 to the Pillar/s you have chosen to start with. This is your baseline. Now look at your Perfect 10 description for those same areas. You have Point A and Point B (the present and your perfect future).

Copy what you wrote for your first Pillar in Step 2: (This will now be thought of as Point A)

Pillar name _____ Value _____
Description:

Now copy what you wrote for the same Pillar in Step 3: (This will now be thought of as Point B)

Pillar name _____ Value _____
Description:

The elephant is eaten one bite at a time. Choose a date one month in the future. Name 2-3 steps that you could take to begin moving your current situation from Point A to Point B.

Date one month from today: _____

Two or three actions I will take to move my Pillar from Point A towards Point B.

If you have chosen to work on two Pillars, repeat the above steps below.

Date one month from today: _____

Two or three actions I will take to move my Pillar from Point A towards Point B.

Step 6:

Action! Your final step will be to put Step 5 into action. Now is the time to get out your calendar and start committing to your first steps. Take those two or three actions from the previous step and get real about when and where you will begin them.

Here are some tips to help you succeed:

- **Make your steps small** enough that they can reasonably be done in the time allotted.
- **Ask yourself if you have what you need** to complete the step before you begin. For instance, if you want to re-organize your office, do you need folders? A new bookshelf? Get what you need in place so that when you start your action things will go smoothly. Getting what you need into place might be your first action step in itself.
- **Keep your time sacred.** Block your time out to complete these steps so that you won't be distracted or interrupted while you are working.
- **Tell someone else what your plans are and ask them to check in on you.** This could be a friend, family member, support group member, coach, etc. Choose someone who is a good listener and who will hold you accountable in a way that works for you.

Step 7:

Being a Solopreneur is a lifestyle as well as a profession. As you move along your steps to your Perfect Pillars, you'll want to evaluate along the way how things are going.

Give yourself permission to revisit your future goals. Your vision may change and that's ok. This can be a living document. Some goals may be accomplished more quickly than you ever dreamed. Others may take longer. The important thing is to stay the path of progress and make adjustments when needed.

As you feel satisfied with your progress in one Pillar, choose the next and begin work on it. You will soon be experiencing the rewards of the great changes you are making.

Keep this document as a way to see how far you have come from the time you started!

Remember, finding support in others is key in keeping up your momentum when you work alone. Seek out camaraderie in family, friends, business groups, networking groups, coaching groups, or with an individual coach who will support you as you grow your ever more successful business and your newly balanced life.

Here's to your amazing future!!

Warmly,

Carmen