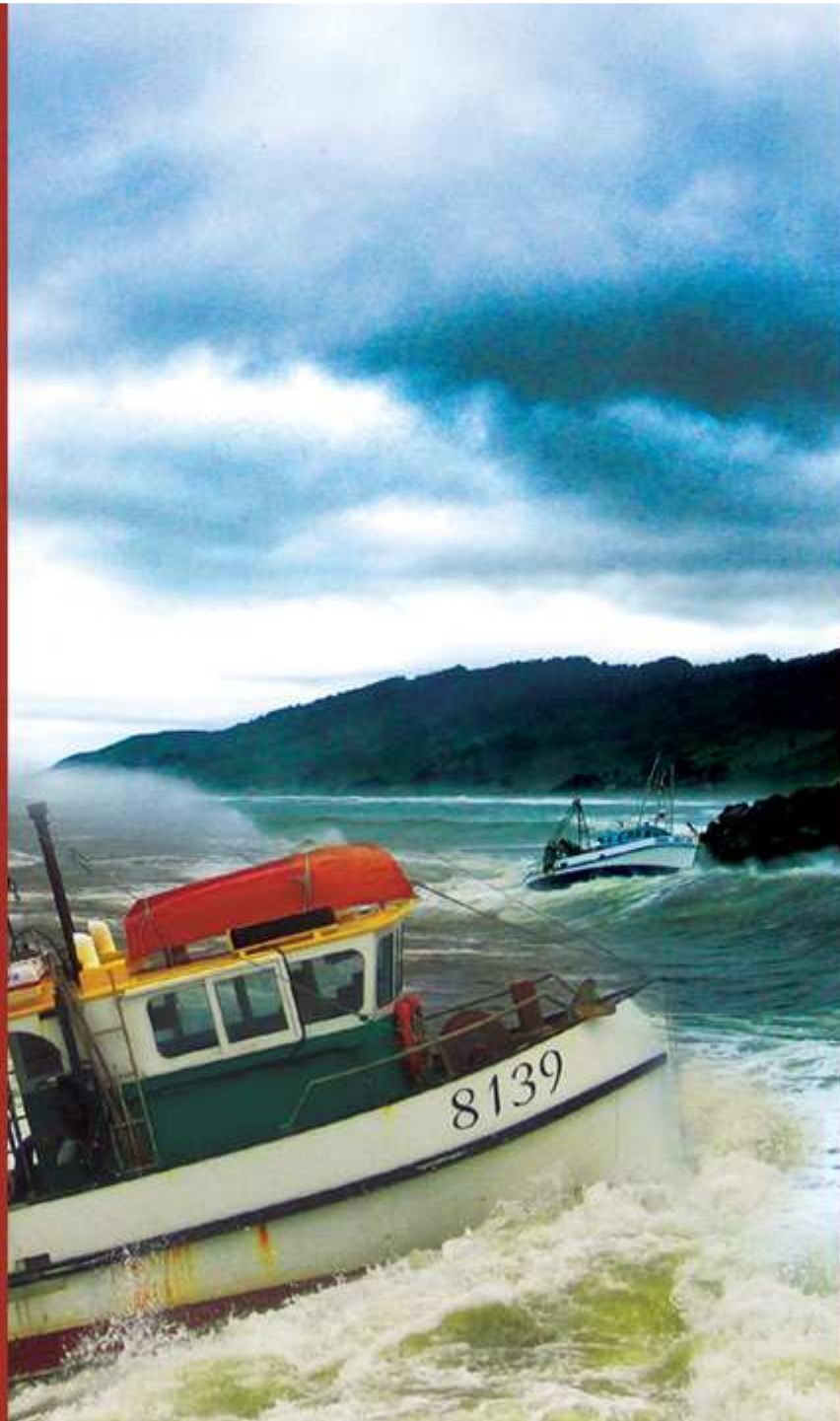


the West Coast
of the
Southern Alps



How important is it to have a regularly updated business strategy?"



How important is it for a small ecotourism operator to have a regularly updated business strategy ?

Important,
obviously.

But trying to
have a regularly
updated business
strategy can
also be a
dangerous thing.



How important is it for a small ecotourism operator to have a regularly updated business strategy ?

3 basic problems with strategic planning for smaller businesses:

- They take too long, and waste valuable time,
- Small businesses don't have a hope of getting all the facts needed to develop a reliable strategic plan,
- We live in a dynamic business world where there are no facts, only conclusions that rest on assumptions that keep changing.



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“A strategic plan is a document used by an organisation to align its organisation and budget structure with organisational priorities, missions, and objectives. A strategic plan should include a mission statement, a description of the business' long-term goals and objectives, and strategies or means the business plans to use to achieve these general goals and objectives. The strategic plan may also identify external factors that could affect achievement of long-term goals, and is a forward-looking plan that aims to map out the means to achieve longer-term goals and to plan a response to unforeseen problems and opportunities. It is a flexible plan that does not regulate activities, but rather outlines the means to achieve certain results, and provides the means to alter the course of action should the desired ends change.”

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“Strategic planning will help you fully uncover your available options, set priorities for them, and define methods to achieve them.”

1. take account of what you see as your business' competitive (and other) **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats**
2. take account of what is happening or might happen in **macro level market and economic trends and market conditions**
3. take into account your personal and business resources and capabilities
4. take account of the different products, services and experiences that you offer now, or could offer in the future
5. take account of the current business environment in which you operate
6. take account of what your **competitors** are doing now, might do in the future, and how they might react to what you do
7. take account of the market opportunities in the place you decide to set up your ecotourism business
8. take account of your potential **customers, their behaviour and their needs and desires** (including trade customers)
9. take account of the effectiveness of your **marketing plan**, including pricing, distribution channels, publicity and media opportunities, core branding and positioning, your core promotional messages and how well you express them, and so on
10. take account of your personal philosophy and ethics
11. take account of your personal, business and other goals
12. take account of your business plans, financial plans, human resources plans and all other types of plan that will lead to towards achieving those goals
13. and so on...

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What to... vs... How
to

How important is it for a small ecotourism operator to have a regularly updated business strategy ?

1. Treat your strategic plan as a 'work in progress' not a one off rite of passage.

2. Don't get tangled up trying to do everything. Instead focus your time on setting your **goals** properly.

3. Define which of the **4 types of goal** you will include in your strategic plan.

4. Express the goals in a way that is **specific and unique to you**.

5. **Align** the goals, put them into an order.

6. **Timeframe** your goals.

7. Link your goals back to your tactical/operational plans (e.g. business, financial, marketing, product development, HR and other plans).

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Business goals.

- To build a successful business.
- To make my fortune.
- To exceed our customers' expectations.
- To become the best nature tourism experience in this region.

Ethical goals.

- To have my trips result in direct benefits to our local environment.
- To benefit the local community in which I operate.

Personal life goals.

Exit goals.

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- To build a *failed* business.
- To *lose* my fortune.
- To *fall short of* our customers' expectations.
- To be the *worst* nature tourism experience in this region.

- To *create no benefit for* the local community or environment in which I operate.

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Ask: "What does this mean - specifically?"

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= to return a net profit of \$200,000 p.a. by April 2009.

= to attract about 3,000 customers prepared to pay about \$100 each, and keep the business costs down to no more than \$100,000 p.a.

= to give people a memorable nature experience.

= to connect them to the rainforest in a way they did not expect.

= for the first time they will really understand how the complex web of relationships that bind a forest together works.

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Example: Your product & service development plan:

• What PSD plans will make it easy for me to attract 3,000 customers?

• What PSD enhancements will make it easier to charge \$100 a head?

• What PSD enhancements will help keep costs to under \$100,000 p.a.?

• How can I plan PS development in a way that will make it easier to sell the business in 2009?

• What PSD plans will help brand and position us an industry leader?



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