

Tip 1

90-Day Quick Plan



Eighteen years ago a man challenged me to not complain for 90 days straight. I couldn't complain about anything, not food, not the weather, nothing. That changed my life. Some people say you can change a habit in 21 days. I question whether that is long enough. While 21 days may be too short, an entire year is too long. Think about it, most people can't keep their New Year's resolutions for even two weeks. People often think, "I have all year to get going on that." **90 days is a sweet spot.** It is a short enough time frame to stay absolutely focused, and yet it is long enough to get more done than most people get done in a whole year. When I lost my weight, the first 90 days were the most important. In those three months, I lost thirty-three pounds, but more importantly, my thinking about food, exercise, and how I spent my time was transformed. Everything changed in 90 days.

Most strategic planning is done at an off-site retreat, yet provides little momentum toward action. Instead of an annual planning session, try

making a 90-Day Quick Plan. Every 90 days we encourage everyone on our team to create a 90-Day Quick Plan. It gives leaders and teams an actionable framework that provides clarity and leads to tangible results both personally and professionally.

Here's how to make it work. Pick an area of your business or life that you'd like to address, and then ask six questions. *The plan should take less than 30 minutes to create.*

Question 1: *Where am I?* If you do not know where you are today, you cannot know where you would like to be in the future. (If you are doing a 90-Day Quick Plan as a team, ask, "Where are we?" and use "we" in the following questions as well.) Ask this question and you will be able to quickly identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. For example, where am I in my relationship with my kids? Where am I in my health? Where am I in comparison to expected sales? Where are we as far as the number of people we are reaching with our message or product?

Question 2: *Where am I going in 90 days?* Remember, it is not one year or five years like many strategic plans. Thinking about your answer in question 1, where would you like to be in 90 days? Write a clear, quantifiable (numerical if possible) goal. You will likely accomplish more than you thought in just 90 days!

Question 3: *Why am I going?* If the "why" is strong enough, the plan does not need to be perfect. If a building is burning and my kids are in it, I don't need to know every detail—I'm going in because my "why" is so strong. When your team is motivated and unified, they'll do the little things differently. They'll stay passionate and focused, and they'll finish.

Question 4: *How are we going to get there?* How? Keep asking how? until your team commits to taking specific actions.

Question 5: *How are we going to get there?* I press people to ask how? until they have come up with a specific action they will take starting today or tomorrow at the latest.

Question 6: *How are we going to get there?* I have found people must ask how? at least three times before they are clear enough. It may take asking how? seven times in order to get enough clarity. The point is don't stop asking how until you or your team has decided on a specific action that will be taken starting today or tomorrow.

Making It Happen

I remember when I really got this idea of asking “how?” three times. I was training and consulting with one of the biggest health care organizations in North America. They needed change! They were losing funding and patients. We were toward the end of our Trust Edge Experience. One hundred fifty top people including the CEO and senior leadership team were all seated at round tables. Each table had defined a specific challenge they were going to tackle. I remember asking one table full of top leaders about what they needed to take action on in order to grow and be more trusted. The table leader said, “We need to be clearer.”

I said, “How will you be clearer?”

After brainstorming with his group, the table leader said, “We are going to communicate more.”

I said, “How?”

After more brainstorming, he said, “We are going to hold each other accountable.”

I said, “How?”

The table, seated with bright minds and fine leaders, had to be pushed three times in order to realize they needed a more specific action plan. They worked together to create a plan for communicating more often and more clearly. An important piece of their plan was how they were going to hold each other accountable to this effort. They were able to start following their plan the very next day.

On a personal level, when I decided to lose weight, I kept asking “how?” until I went from “eat less and exercise more” to defining fifteen specific actionable ideas I could implement on a daily basis.

With greater clarity around your 90-day plan, you will gain the trust of your team and bottom-line results will follow.

“The most pathetic person
in the world is someone who has sight
but no vision.” —Helen Keller



To watch David teach the 90-Day Quick Plan, go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=YQsZRU8TW-4

However beautiful
the **strategy**,
you should
occasionally look
at the **results**.

—Winston Churchill