

7 Rules for Agile Planning

1. **Make it Concrete!** Put it in writing. It's a well-researched fact that writing makes you think more seriously about something and thus gives you better results than something that you just think about from time to time.
2. **KISS – Keep It Short and Sweet!** You don't want to have a fancy 3-ring binder that sits on the shelf and gathers dust because no one bothers to look at it any more!
3. **Do it Quickly!** Obviously you want to take the time to do it right. At the same time, you don't want to take so long that the environment has changed around you and you've missed good opportunities because you were "waiting for the plan to be complete."
4. **Focus!** Pay attention to the important things and the little stuff will take care of itself.
5. **Make it real!** No plan is worth the paper it's printed on if there aren't steps identified to make your Objectives or Strategies happen. An effective plan includes the significant projects that are required for success.
6. **Follow-through!** Without consistent follow-through (i.e., regular review and adjustment meetings) you'll never see your plan get implemented. It'll be "All Talk and no Trousers."
7. **Stay Flexible!** The world and your business change – sometimes quickly and strongly – and you need to be able to respond appropriately. Once you have your plan, let it guide you but don't let it possess you. Take the time to review your plan regularly and make sure that it still makes sense.

3 little mantras to help you use your plan effectively

- **Avoid Perfect.** Perfect is the enemy of the good. "Planning to Perfection" means getting a plan and putting it to work... NOW.
- **Meet Monthly.** Unless you get together and review your results on a regular basis, you won't be able to tell where you are or how you're doing. Even worse, you won't be able to make those little adjustments that make the difference between winning and being an "also ran">
- **Replan Regularly.** Things change, and so should your plan... whenever it needs to, depending on the situation, the results you're providing, or new opportunities.

Peter Bohacek, 6/9/2006: Make it a visual/chart; "A strategy that doesn't tell you what to do tomorrow is a failure."

