

Answer these questions as a first step in strategic plan-ting:

1. Why did you start your business?
2. What is your biggest wish – if you could accomplish ANYTHING, what would it be?
3. What are your hopes and dreams for your business?
4. How big do you want to grow your company?
5. How quickly do you want it to grow?
6. How much time do you want to spend on your business vs. other interests (like your personal life!)?
7. What are your company values?
8. What do you love most about your business?
9. What do you like least about running your business?
10. What makes your company different from the competition?
11. What does your company do really well, perhaps even better than your competitors?
12. What good things do your customers say about you that they don't say about your competitors?
13. What do your competitors do better than you?
14. What positive things do your customers say about your competitors that they don't say about your company?
15. Looking back on the last year of your business, what are you most proud of?
16. What 2 or 3 things are you least proud of, made you the most uncomfortable, or kept you from getting where you wanted to go in the past 12 months?
17. What would you do differently, knowing what you know now?
18. What 2 or 3 things would you like to stop or change next year?
19. If you did a previous strategic plan, what were your goals?
20. Did you achieve them?
21. Why or why not?
22. How do you describe your company to potential customers?
23. What region or geographic area do you operate in?
24. What products and / or services do you offer?
25. Describe your average customer.
26. What do your best customers have in common?
27. How does your average customer differ from your best ones?
28. What kinds of customers would you rather not deal with?
29. Who do your customers see as your competitors?
30. How are your competitors similar to your company?
31. How are your competitors different from your company?
32. What things are happening outside your company that are opportunities for growth?
33. What things are happening outside your company that are possible threats to your growth?
34. Ask your employees: What do you like best about your job and why?
35. Ask your employees: What do you like least about your job and why?
36. Ask your employees: Do you see any opportunities that we may be missing?
37. Ask your best customers: Why do you choose to shop here?
38. Ask your best customers: If you could change one thing about your shopping experience, what would it be and why?
39. What were your financial results for the past year?
40. Are you happy with them?