

Small Business Tips & Advice

Check Up On Your Business Success

(NAPSA)—When you started your business, you had a plan. You looked at where you were and where you wanted to be, and determined how to get there. However, if you're not doing regular "check-ups," you may have outgrown your original plan and not know it.

Experts say you should revisit your business plan at least annually, if not more often. At these annual checkups of your business plan, tweak your plan and understand how decisions you make are consistent with it, or are changing in reaction to the market.

Don't forget to consider e-commerce, if it makes sense for your business. Any plan that leaves out e-commerce leaves itself open to skepticism from investors, although there are some venture capitalists dedicated to funding more traditional businesses.

It's possible your plan isn't appropriate for your business. For example, if you're selling a product and realize that there's a use for that product that neither you nor the manufacturer anticipated, you need to respond quickly—and well—to that.

There are a number of things you can do if you're worried your business plan may not be meeting your needs. Examine your corporate culture to discover any impediments to change. Some traditions and practices may need to be revamped to meet changing corporate conditions.

Don't abandon your business plan entirely unless you're changing your business signifi-



Be sure your business plan is continuing to meet your current needs.

cantly. The Company Corporation and SCORE have co-developed a workbook that can help. *How to Really Structure Your Business* provides small businesses with a foundation for selecting the business structure that best fits their needs. It also removes the "mystery" surrounding the incorporation process.

While Fortune 500 companies may have mentoring programs, many small businesses don't. Get a CEO coach. Skilled counselors such as those at SCORE can help you learn how to take your company to the next level.

Since 1964, these counselors have assisted more than seven million aspiring entrepreneurs and small business owners through counseling and business workshops.

For more information and tips, or to find a counselor you can work with to expand your business, go to www.score.org or call (800) 634-0245.