



# Don't throw out that baby! Structure For Success<sup>®</sup> instead!

There are many proverbial sayings that the current economic situation calls to mind like: Don't throw out the baby with the bath water, and Don't cut off your nose to spite your face. It could be that for the first time the message behind these phrases comes to light. The potential disaster of knee-jerk downsizing and blanket pay cuts may be as foolish as throwing out that baby with the bath water. There are no hard and fast rules for navigating these economic waters. How to react requires individual consideration. No two companies are the same.

Chances are you spent months developing your business plan which outlined, in great depth, how your products/services are unique to the market. You probably spent weeks considering each step to be taken in growing your business into a larger share of the market. So, why would you abandon your vision and mission by reactive downsizing or cut backs?

Knee-jerk reactions can create the "perception" of panic thus affecting employee and customer confidence. Key employees may begin looking for more secure employment. Customers may lose incentive

to remain loyal, taking their business to less expensive competitors or lured away by proactive recession targeted marketing campaigns. Are you aware of what fear and insecurity cost you in productivity, quality, and overall morale?

Perhaps this article is getting to you too late. Perhaps lowering head count and payroll expenses were the most immediate right choice for your business. Now what? More than ever, the loyalty of your employees and customers are vital to your sustained success. Furthermore, most likely the aftermath of these decisions is a backlog of incomplete projects and overstretched staff. At the very least, you are probably looking at that *one* project that must be completed, but you now lack the resources (human and other) to get it off your desk or launched. Therefore, the solution to not only sustaining but succeeding in this economic environment is to structure for success.



*Business Solutions: Your strategic partner in meeting goals and objectives*

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## Structure is *NOT* a four-letter word

America is most notable for its independent and entrepreneurial spirit. Its no wonder that entrepreneurs and small businesses make up 99% of the country's business firms. This same spirit is often associated with words like freedom and artistic expression. For many, the word *Structure* is associated with rigidity and devoid of artistic expression. Business Solutions wants to assure the free that STRUCTURE is *not* a four letter word! One case in point proves that, with a foundation of structure, the creative process can flourish and produce innovative life changing products.

W.L. Gore & Associates, best known for the invention of Gore-Tex, is a prime example of structure supported "non-structure" and is one of the most innovative and far reaching product development companies of our time. W.L. Gore & Associates has contributed to the dental, medical, sports, music, and clothing industries to name a few.

How do they accomplish this? There is no managerial hierarchy and no departmental divisions. Rather, employees are grouped in teams. The teams have a

natural leadership selection based on an individual's enthusiasm and contribution to a project. Furthermore, employees are encourage to "play" on other teams if they have an interest or can contribute something of value to a project. In this way there is a cross pollination of creativity and innovation.

As free and creative as this sounds, there has to be a foundation of structure that pulls it all together, and there is. There is a CEO and other key functionaries that develop and maintain the administrative systems, policies, and procedures. Without this foundation of structure, there would be no effective means of communication, HR administration, nor finance management. On second thought, I bet on payday this company thinks structure *IS* a four letter word...YEAH!

Let us help you put the Yeah! into your structure.

**707.537.6947 / [www.StructureForSuccess.com](http://www.StructureForSuccess.com)**

1: <http://www.census.gov/ipeds/www/smallbus.html>  
2: Deutschman, Alan, "The Fabric of Creativity." *Fast Company* 9 December 2007. [http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/89/open\\_gore.html?page=0%2C0](http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/89/open_gore.html?page=0%2C0)

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Business Solutions developed the Structure For Success® program based on field experience and is aligned with the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) and the Business Analysis Body of Knowledge (BABOK). Here we share the 6 steps that can lead you to the goals and objectives you desire, namely moving projects forward to retain customers and quality employees.

**STEP ONE- IDENTIFY.** Identify the desired outcome. Where do the operational breakdowns or inefficiencies exist? Are there new goals or objectives the company would like to set, either in response to the economy or for long term planning? What available resources (human and other) can be utilized / contracted in producing the desired outcome?

**STEP TWO- ANALYZE.** Analyze the specifics of the identified issues, tasks, or goals. Depending on the desired outcome, this process might require using analysis tools like SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats).

**STEP THREE- STRATEGIZE.** Once you have identified the desired outcome and have a handle on the available resources, build a plan to allocate the resources and set timelines for the project. Be careful to build your key producers into the plan only where and when absolutely necessary. The idea isn't to lose productivity while you structure for success.

**STEP FOUR- IMPLEMENT.** Put your strategic plan into action. In the identification process a project manager should have been selected. It will be that person's job to ensure the project stays focused, on budget and on time. As no project is successful without team work, the project manager is ideally someone with good people skills as well as time and financial management skills.

**STEP FIVE- EVALUATE.** Evaluate the progress of the project. Often, corrective measures and adjustments to timelines are required as unforeseen challenges arise. Again, an effective project manager will be able to keep these to a minimum or of little impact to the overall strategy.

**STEP SIX- VALIDATE.** Validation is a different version of analysis. In the validation process, the team reviews the overall project and determines if the desired outcome is met. In other words, did the project meet the need? Is it sustainable? Are the successes replicable? Any open issues, invoices, or payments should be closed at this stage.

Here are a couple of case studies in which the Structure For Success® program was applied:

**A nonprofit child care center:**

**Problem:** Under earned scholarships and grants threatened the organization's ability to provide services to underserved children and families. Under qualified personnel and lack of relationship development with funding sources created risk to the business' sustainability.

**Action:** Using the Structure For Success® process, errors and inaccuracies in fund tracking were identified. Utilizing powerful formula functions in Excel workbooks not only improved the accuracy of fund tracking but uncovered miss-

applied (thus underused) funds. They also implemented a relationship building campaign with funding agencies.

**Result:** Increase in children served by 140% without adding to administrative head count. Trust was established between the organization and the funding agencies, resulting in greater assistance, advance notice on changing policies / funding opportunities, and more cooperative treatment.

**A global wine making corporation:**

**Problem:** Unqualified personnel, lack of centralized data, and breakdown of interdepartmental communication resulted in inaccurate data entry, payment processing, State reporting, and poor morale.

**Action:** Using the Structure For Success® process, breakdowns and inefficiencies were identified. Centralized data management, creation of an interdepartmental project team, and automated processes and procedures were implemented to meet the objectives.

**Result:** A 90% increase in interdepartmental efficiency, State reports submitted accurately and prior to due date, cut headcount by 2 consultants, improved company reputation through accurate and timely payments.

Despite the diversity of business profiles and needs, any business (or individual) objective is obtainable through use of the same process: Identification, Analysis, Strategic Planning, Implementation, Evaluation and Validation.

Business Solutions is a consulting firm specializing in the design of administrative and operational structure in meeting enterprise-wide goals and objectives. Founded in 1994, Business Solutions was conceived out of requests from entrepreneurial friends seeking advice and support to grow their businesses. Today, our clients range from entrepreneurs to government agencies, small to midsized and global corporations in both the profit and nonprofit sectors.

Overall, the reasons behind our success are the integrity, dedication, optimism, and determination brought to every situation. We are honest with our clients about the value we bring to a project and deliver on those objectives. So, don't throw that baby out with the bath water! Let us help you get that ONE project done that will make a difference to your success. At business Solutions, we are experts on structuring for success and the next step in maintaining your competitive edge! Contact us today for a consultation.

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***Designing Structure For Success***