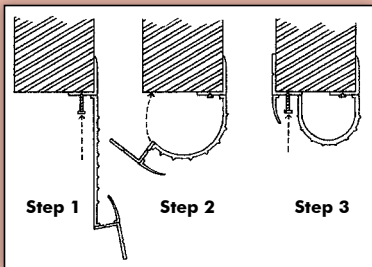
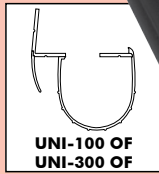
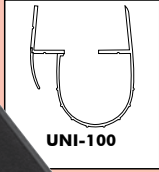
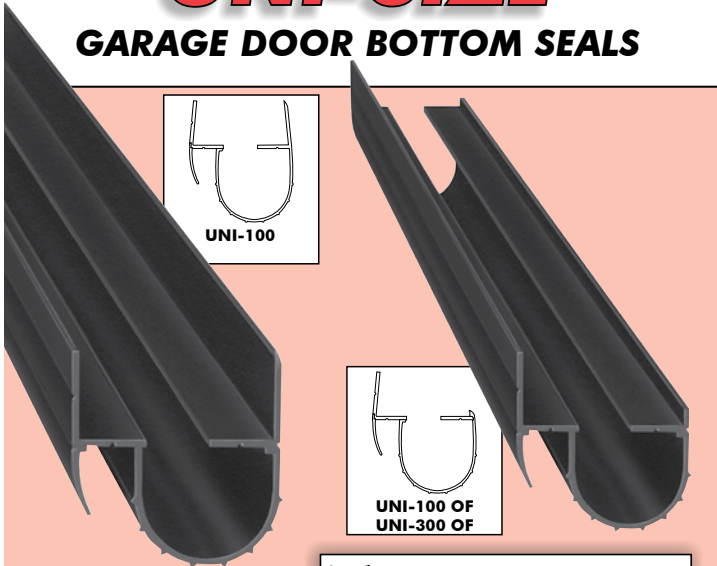


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**Tips** Good Ideas for Your Business

sales



*What's Your Business Plan?*



By Terry Lich

Garage door dealers typically have a truck maintenance schedule for their truck fleet. Engine tune-ups, balancing and rotating tires, and changing engine oil are all part of the program to maximize the life of the vehicles and save on expensive repair costs.

**So why don't you do the same thing for your business?** Why don't you schedule a time each year to tune up your business plan to make your company more efficient, profitable, and fun? Here are some tips on how to get started.

**Key Advisors**

A good business plan is not created in a vacuum. You want the advice and consent of key people who know your business and your industry.

• **Accountant/Bookkeeper/CPA.** Before you plan, you must know the financial state of your business. Your accountant can also help you prepare sales and income forecasts that can help guide your growth. (A \$300,000 sales increase will make a big difference in how you think about your business.)

• **Key Employees.** They can be an excellent source of enlightening information. Ask them to tell you the good, the bad, and the ugly! See the SWOT section below for an organized way to do this.

• **Your Manufacturer's Sales Rep.** Most sales reps want your business to succeed. Seasoned reps constantly see a full range of effective and ineffective door dealers. Ask them to spend some quality time with you to review your operation and share good ideas from other dealers.

• **Key Advisors.** Identify some trusted friends who can give good business advice. They may have already experienced the problems you're facing and know how to effectively solve the issues.

**SWOT Analysis**

The planning process often begins with a questionnaire that can uncover issues that are hidden to you. Ask your employees, your advisors mentioned above, and perhaps some key customers: What do they consider to be your company's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)? Their answers will help you focus on key changes you may want to make in your company.

*continued on page 66*

### The Plan

Both your Strategic Plan (looking forward five years) and your Tactical Plan (to be accomplished this year) have a similar format. Here are a few sample areas that both plans will cover.

### Facility

The first impression of your business starts with your building and yard signage. If it looks inviting, customers will want to come in, look around, and discuss garage doors with you.

### Production

Think about it. Customers call because their garage doors are broken and they need your expertise. How exciting!

Your technician has called ahead to announce that he is minutes from the customer's home and is looking forward to working with them. He shows up in a clean truck, identified with your company name and logo. He has the right tools, inventory, and product knowledge to solve the customer's problem efficiently.

When the work is done, your customer promotes your company by telling everyone they know. This doesn't happen by magic or luck. It takes planning.

### Sales/Marketing

Your sales staff is trained in product knowledge and knows how to offer the best product for the application. Your company brochure and product literature build the customer's confidence in you as a professional.

### Operations

Finances, human resources, and capital expenditures fall under operations. If your goal is a \$300,000 sales increase over the next five years, you may need to hire and train technicians and an additional salesperson. Your capital expenditures could include a truck or two, plus equipping the truck.

Instead of these big expenses, your business plan could drive your company to be more efficient: more production per truck, more sales per salesperson, and more profit per doors installed. Think of the profit potential on that \$300,000 increase in sales!

Schedule a time each year to tune up your business. Bring in your team. A more efficient and profitable company is sure to follow. ■

*Terry Lich has been working with garage door dealers for 30+ years, and he has helped over 40 dealers with business plans. He has prepared an eight-page business plan model. To receive a free copy, contact him at [lichconsulting@gmail.com](mailto:lichconsulting@gmail.com) or call 815-994-3390.*

*When the work is done, your customer promotes your company by telling everyone they know. This doesn't happen by magic or luck. It takes planning.*

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