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STRATEGIC PLANNING CHECKLIST

For Manufacturers Who Want to Make More.

DO YOU WANT TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS?

If it's been awhile since you did a formal strategic plan, now is the time! Use this checklist of questions and action items to get the ball rolling.

MARKET ANALYSIS

START HERE

INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

- [ ] Do we have a backlog? How long? Is that high/low for us?
- [ ] Do we have a good sales pipeline? What is it for the next 3 months? 6 months?
- [ ] Are current customers reordering at their usual rate? Less? More?
- [ ] What has the trend in revenue & profitability been for the last 4 quarters?

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

- [ ] How are the industries we serve doing globally and locally?
- [ ] What are the latest trends in those industries driving growth in the coming year?

THE COMPETITION

- [ ] Identify who and where our competitors are (Local, Regional, Global).
- [ ] Analyze how we are the same/different from our competitors.
- [ ] Evaluate the performance of our competitors.

CUSTOMER INSIGHTS

- [ ] Identify our top customers and their contribution to revenue.
- [ ] Assess vulnerability if top customers leave.
- [ ] Consider if it's time to "fire" some customers who consistently result in losses.
- [ ] Identify companies similar to our current customers.
- [ ] Determine common product requests from our customers.
- [ ] Explore other industries using similar products.
- [ ] Investigate customer satisfaction and strategies for improvement.

CAPACITY & EFFICIENCY

- [ ] Evaluate machine and equipment utilization efficiency.
- [ ] Assess capacity to handle more jobs without hiring or buying more machines.
- [ ] Identify bottlenecks or inefficiencies in production processes.
- [ ] Explore optimization of production schedules for increased throughput.
- [ ] Consider investments in new equipment or technology to improve productivity.

PRICING & PROFITABILITY

- [ ] Analyze the competitiveness of pricing strategies.
- [ ] Determine the win rate for bids.
- [ ] Assess profitability on won parts.
- [ ] Explore pricing adjustments to increase margins without losing customers.
- [ ] Examine the profitability of different machining services offered.

QUALITY CONTROL

- [ ] Identify recurring quality issues and track them.
- [ ] Monitor the effectiveness of quality issue resolutions.
- [ ] Consider implementing quality certifications to attract more customers.
- [ ] Investigate whether disqualifications from quotes are related to lack of certifications.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- [ ] Assess the current cash flow situation and strategies for improvement.
- [ ] Establish a budget and financial projections to guide revenue growth efforts.
- [ ] Evaluate the accuracy of past projections.
- [ ] Explore options for securing additional financing or funding.
- [ ] Research available grants, low-interest loans, etc., from local, state, or federal governments

TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Accurate data about production performance is critical for making the best decisions.

- [ ] Identify technological advancements in machining.
- [ ] Assess the ROI on potential technology investments.
- [ ] Explore immediate efficiency improvements with existing resources.
- [ ] Stay updated with the latest industry advancements.
- [ ] Consider active involvement in local, regional, and national associations.

MARKETING & SALES

- [ ] Evaluate the effectiveness of current marketing strategies.
- [ ] Measure marketing success through metrics like followers, clicks, page views, and email opens.
- [ ] Explore digital marketing, social media, and online presence.
- [ ] Assess the readiness and training of the sales team.
- [ ] Investigate opportunities to expand the customer base through networking and partnerships.

DIVERSIFICATION & SPECIALIZATION

- [ ] Explore opportunities to expand into other industries.
- [ ] Identify adjacent industries to the current ones served.
- [ ] Leverage existing customers spanning multiple industries.
- [ ] Evaluate the potential for premium pricing in specialized machining services.

EMPLOYEE TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

- [ ] Evaluate employee skills and identify training needs.
- [ ] Assess opportunities for additional training or skill development.
- [ ] Research programs offered by local, state, or federal government agencies.
- [ ] Explore ways to improve employee retention and morale.
- [ ] Establish metrics for measuring employee performance and incentives.

Using this checklist will gather all the information you need to create a robust strategic plan to make your business more profitable and pave the way for long term growth.