



**International Organization
for Standardization**

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ISO Chairs' Conference: June 2005

Business plans for TC's: The pro's and con's

Graham Holloway

Chair: ISO/TC 157 "*Mechanical contraceptives*"

“Most of what we call management consists of making it difficult for people to get their work done.”

--Peter F. Drucker

The fewer data needed, the better the information. And an overload of information, that is, anything much beyond what is truly needed, leads to information blackout. It does not enrich, but impoverishes.

--Peter F. Drucker

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From the U.S. Small Business Administration:

“The importance of a comprehensive well thought out business plan cannot be overemphasized. Much hinges on it ... (including the) achievement of your goals and objectives.”

“Despite the critical nature of a business plan, many owners and managers drag their feet when it comes to preparing a written document. They argue that their marketplace changes too fast for a business plan to be useful or that they just don't have enough time -- they are too busy running the business.”

“Without a business plan, you will end up going from crisis to crisis, putting out fires, never looking at your operation in the long-term.”

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The Ben Franklin decision maker



1. What use are BP's ?
2. What are the problems with them ?
3. What improvements can we make ?

What use are Business Plans ?

- ✓ **Force TC to focus on needed strategic initiatives**
- ✓ **Guide work programme:**
 - Assign priorities
 - Set deadlines
 - Allocate resources
- ✓ **Monitor and react to changes, trends**
- ✓ **Help in quest for Global Relevance by soliciting input from public**

X They take so long to complete, they are always out of date

X Nobody reads them

X They are not cost-effective

What are the problems with what we have ?

- **They really do take a long time to prepare and become accepted**
- **Annual review, although necessary, can be a problem**
- **TC members want to address technical issues at meetings, not what they see as a bureaucratic exercise**
- **Discussing a BP in a large Plenary is impossible !**
- **They contain too much detail:**
 - **Executive summary**
 - **ISO introduction**
 - **Quantitative indicators of business environment**
 - **Benefits expected**
 - **Factors affecting completion of work programme**

What improvements can we make?

- **Revisit format (look again at SPS)**
- **Give only necessary, targeted information**
- **Assist TCs to work in “lean and mean” mode**
- **Better training for/ assistance to Chairs**
- **Consider publishing TC communiqués as brief extracts from meeting minutes**

Conclusions

- Yes, we need BP's if we are serious about the work we are doing
- But they could be shorter !
- Maybe in a different format ?
- This will ensure that they are updated
- Some Chairs might need advice on how to work smarter, not harder
- It shouldn't be the chore it is perceived to be

The final word:

“If you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there”

--Lewis Carroll, “Through the looking glass”

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