

Chapter Nine Exercises

Exercise One - Seeds, Weeds, and Needs

This exercise provides you with a structured approach for analyzing your business in the current climate. More importantly, leadership teams can use this tool to identify clear direction when everything around them seems to be in turmoil.

Let's define the components first. And yes, they're basically what you might guess. Seeds are the things that are working well right now (what you should expand). Weeds are the things that are weighing you down and preventing you from moving forward (what you should eliminate or minimize). Finally, needs are your opportunities (what you should start doing to get better results).

Individually or as a leadership team, set aside 30 minutes every month or quarter to go through this exercise, and write down the answers to the following questions.

Seeds:

What strategies and projects are currently moving your business forward, expanding your market share or increasing revenue?

Where are you getting the most traction?

What is producing tangible results right now?

Notes:

Seeds, Weeds, and Needs

Weeds:

- What strategies and projects feel like they are unproductive or inadequate?
- Where are you consistently hitting roadblocks?
- What could you prune back to allow for activities that are more profitable?

Needs:

- What strategies and projects could you adopt that would accelerate your success?
- What opportunities could you take advantage of?
- Are there markets and trends you could leverage now to get ahead of your competition?

Share your answers with the team, and use them as the foundation for an open group discussion. If you uncover some common answers, you may have landed on action items for immediate consideration. Filter those ideas through your core values and brand identity to determine whether these changes have enough potential to make them worth the risk. If so, go for it—with the knowledge that you can always adjust as you go.

I also encourage my clients to save their notes from these sessions and reflect on them as time passes. Those can sometimes reveal some interesting trends of their own!

When you repeat this exercise regularly, the shed-fast attitude will begin seeping into the consciousness of your leaders and, perhaps, your whole company. You can quickly and objectively assess the health of your business, even in the middle of outrageous change. And, over time, you'll get more comfortable with doing what works and eliminating what doesn't.

Notes:
