



## Which Came First... The Chicken Or The Egg?

*By Gil Efron*

In all honesty, I don't know if Charles Darwin or Albert Einstein could better lay to rest this "chicken or egg" conundrum, but I felt compelled to give it a try.

Let me begin by explaining that I think about chickens and eggs often... especially when I have initial conversations with business owners (prospective clients). The reason is that too often I hear one of these business owners say:

"I'll start aggressively marketing as soon as business picks up..." or

"As soon as the economy turns around, I'll make the necessary changes..." or

"Once we get the new website up and running, we'll be able to turn our attention to updating the business plan..."

I know the new website is important. And I know it needs to be done now. But heck, what if it's the wrong website? What if it doesn't take into account a further corrosion of the economy... what competitors are likely to do... or how the world will change in the next year or two? (Times are always changing.)

I'm not just picking on websites. The list of... well, let's call them distractions (or reasons not to focus on what's really important)... is unending.

Here are a few more. You can always recognize them because they start with "Once we."

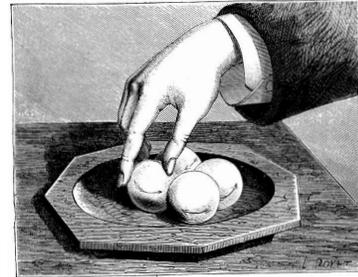
Once we...

- Find an investor
- Get bank approval
- Hire a new employee
- Install the new computer system
- Install the new widget maker
- Move to a smaller building
- Paint the warehouse
- Close the big deal

## Is “Planning” The Chicken Or The Egg?

It doesn’t matter... as long as the planning comes first.

Friend and colleague Dr. Dan Schaefer describes how he teaches clients to “work backwards.” He takes clients out five years, helps them create a *vision* of what their businesses and lives will look like in the year 2018. And then he works backwards with them in order to build a plan to reach their goal.



Everyone in business admits that planning is the most important thing. And everyone in business claims to be devoted to the concept of “Working on your business rather than in your business.”

Why then, when I talk to a business owner about planning do I hear, “**Can’t plan now. Can’t think about tomorrow. I gotta finish my new website today.**”

If you’re not moving forward... if you’re not actively planning (even during turbulent times like these) you’re standing still. Worse than standing still, perhaps you could be moving backwards.

### Numerous Ways To Plan

There are numerous ways to plan.

You can *do it yourself*... on a paper cocktail napkin while sitting at the bar having a beer (or two). Realistically, you need more room for the myriad details of your plan than that cocktail napkin can accommodate.



Plus, because bars are often subject to occasional spills, that napkin could become drenched... and the bartender leans over and says, “Hey, buddy, your business plan is all wet.” (Okay, you can groan here.)

So, let’s take planning out of the bar. And, because *two heads are better than one*, let’s make sure you bring someone else into the picture. This someone else is NOT an employee, spouse, or casual friend. It’s a professional... or a team... that are willing to stand up and tell you what they think — the good... the bad... and the ugly!

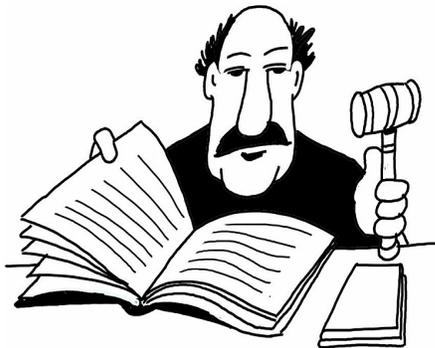
You could hire a professional to help you write a business plan. Notice that I say “*help you*” write a business plan. You can’t just say to a business plan writer, “Write a

business plan for me” and let them go off and write it. This approach invariably produces a work of fiction that sits on the shelf.

If you go this way — with a professional — be prepared to work with them. Let them guide the process. But let it be an expression of you.

You could work with a business coach, consultant, or advisor to help you plan. As in the case of the business plan writer, they are here to help you, not do it for you. Set goals. Create accountability. Light a fire under your need to survive the economic recession.

My preference is to seek out a business coach, consultant, or advisor who not only works with you to plan, but sticks around to help you through the *implementation* portion of the process. The best plan... without precise follow through and implementation... is like no plan at all.



You could join a Mastermind Group or create an informal board of advisors. I like Mastermind Groups because, when properly facilitated, they really put the pressure on.

They keep the business owner *honest* about planning and implementation. While a coach or consultant may not want to hurt your feelings, members in a Mastermind Group will be considerably more frank about what they see and hear.

Of course, you could do all three. And you could do it now, because you don't need to wait for anything else to happen before you do.

## Planning Is Easier When Things Are Going Great

Obviously, planning is easier when things are great, the economy is pumped up, and the phone is ringing off the hook. If you're wrong... if you make a mistake here or there (even one that costs you thousands of dollars)... oh well... it's not the end of the world. You'll bounce back quickly.

But planning — when we're footslogging through media reports of gloom and doom and out-of-control government spending — is a whole lot more complex.

Planning always works to your benefit when you come to grips with the fact that the planning must always come first... and that working on your business must continue to be your number one priority.



I know you need the website.

I know you have all of those other priorities. But there is no way that anyone can make the very best tactical decisions without first having the strategy in place.

Hey, it ain't easy.

But it is essential.

Don't assume that you can bounce around from one task to another — dealing with the chicken before the egg... or the egg before the chicken — and expect to build a business that's strong enough to withstand the pressures of the economy... and emerge from any economic downturn or external influence or challenge poised for success.



Don't be chicken. Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain. Get into a serious planning mode now.

Without it, you could be in real trouble!

To learn more about more effective and strategic planning, call me directly at **800-226-2428**. Or send an email to **GilEffron@TheGrowthTeam.ORG**. I'm always up for a conversation on any of my favorite business topics from marketing and strategic business planning to building cultures of incredible success.

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From strategic marketing planning to creative problem solving and precise implementation, Gil Effron's business and marketing skills are diverse, and the outcome on behalf of his clients always positive.

He is co-founder of **The Growth Team**, a boutique coaching and consulting firm dedicated to helping business owners, CEOs, and leadership teams effectively tackle urgent challenges, improve organizational efficiency, and map successful strategies for future growth and profitability. Built on experience and utilizing a highly reliable process approach, The Growth Team is as comfortable and effective solving the challenges of troubled businesses as it is guiding those about to burst at the seams as a result of rapid growth or a sudden winning streak.

Gil is a highly skilled business and marketing strategist and a proficient writer. In addition to his latest book, *How to Give Your Business an Extreme Marketing Makeover*, he has written and published hundreds of articles on business and marketing.

He holds a bachelors degree from the University of Cincinnati, a masters from Michigan State University, and pursued post-graduate studies at Ohio State University. He currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce and is an active member of CEO Clubs of New York City and the West Pasco County Chamber of Commerce. For additional information call 800-226-2428, extension 701, or send an email to [GilEfron@TheGrowthTeam.ORG](mailto:GilEfron@TheGrowthTeam.ORG).

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