

Commit to Your Health. Commit to a Plan.

By Robert L. Selders, Jr.

In my last article, I addressed the first important step to making health a part of your business strategy and personal life: Make the decision. Now let's focus on the second step toward a healthier, more productive you: Commit to planning.

As a business owner or entrepreneur, you know the value of having a solid plan in place before you even open doors for business. Business success doesn't just happen by chance. It takes careful, deliberate planning. It's like the old adage says: Fail to plan, and plan to fail.

The same holds true for your health and fitness. Making the conscious decision to dedicate time and energy to your health is great. But without a plan of action, all the good intentions in the world won't be enough to get you where you want to be. You must be willing and ready to set aside the time, sit down, do some soul-searching, and then put pen to paper to create a plan for how you'll integrate health and fitness into your busy life.

Yes, it's a commitment. Your plan won't come together on its own. And your plan won't look exactly like everyone else's. When developing a plan for health and fitness, you'll need to identify your personal goals. Do you want to lose weight, lean out, gain muscle, improve your stamina, have more energy, reduce stress, train for a specific sport, combat a health issue or condition? Knowing your goals is the first step in making a plan to reach them.

You'll also need to develop a plan for how to incorporate health and fitness into your business routine and life. If you're like most small business owners and employees, your work days are longer and busier than most. When will you find time to exercise and recover? What kind of fitness program will you adopt? Is that the best program for your goals? How many days a week do you plan to work out? What will your rest days be? Developing a concrete plan for scheduling your fitness will be critical to your success.

You'll also need to commit to planning your nutrition. Transitioning to healthier habits doesn't happen overnight, and it won't happen just because you want it to. You'll need a plan for eliminating those ingrained eating habits — the morning doughnuts or the after-work cocktail — that are negatively impacting your health, and for adding foods that will fuel your fitness and performance, in the office as well as in the gym.

Once you commit to planning for your health, you may need someone to help you develop and implement a doable, sustainable plan that works for you. A great place to start in your planning process is to assess your fitness current level. Like your business, you probably have some idea of how fit you are (or not) today. Assessing and recording baseline metrics can give you benchmarks against which to gauge your progress. To determine your present aerobic and muscular fitness, flexibility and body composition, consider recording things like:

- Your BMI (body mass index), scale weight, and body fat percentage
- The circumference of your chest, waist (at navel level), and hips
- The time it takes you to walk one mile and your heart rate before/afterwards
- The number of sit ups, squats (to a known target), pushups you can do in one minute
- Whether or not you can touch your toes. If not, how far away are you?

There's no shortage of workout plans available so you'll need to find one that fits you. Be sure to go at

your own pace and build in different physical activities into your daily routine. Then monitor your progress and reassess your fitness after you've begun – start doing this quarterly and make the necessary adjustments to your plan. Doing this will help you stay engaged and motivated to continue making positive changes in your health which will ultimately benefit your business.

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