

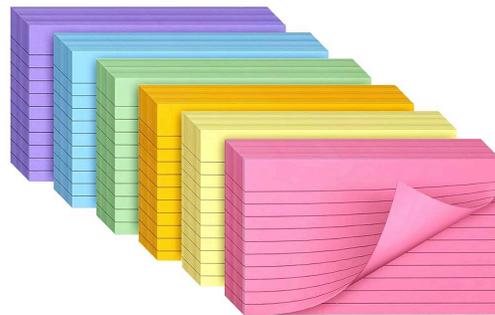


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Over the years, many folks have said words to the effect that, "If you can't fit your business plan on the back of a napkin, it's too complex to work." To that, I would add, "If your plan isn't in front of you every day, you'll never follow it."

Index Card Plans part 1

Most of us think of a "business plan" as a stack of paper more than an inch thick, held in a binder and stuck on a shelf or in a drawer. They're a pain to create, and it seems like the only people who look at them are bankers and anyone else from whom we want funds.



Business plans that are too thick to read and understand, that we keep hidden away, can never help an entrepreneur or business owner! The most crucial aspect of the Index Card Plan System is that you can keep one or more copies of the entire Plan in front of you every day. If you write out multiple copies, you can put them in different places where you'll see them each day. Tape a copy of your Index Card Plan to your computer monitor, the door of the break room fridge, and even your bathroom mirror. You want it in your face where you'll be reminded of where you're heading and the steps you need to take to get there.

Eventually, you're going to have very short, direct plans and action item lists on small pieces of paper, just about the size of 4 × 6 inch Index Cards. You'll do that so that you can keep these objectives and action items in front of you each and every day. They are meant to remind you of exactly what you're supposed to be doing, and what goals you're working toward.

But in order to build these lists, you'll need to start with a regular sheet of paper. Lined or unlined, your choice, whatever you feel most comfortable with. It's just a

worksheet where you'll be putting all your raw ideas and goals.

Build Your Plans

The process of building your Index Card Plans starts with a 5-step process. The sixth step is to actually write out your Index Card Plan - or Plans, if you run a business and want to use more than one type (see below). Here are the five steps as a bullet list:

- Determine where you're starting from - write it down on your worksheet
- Determine where you want to go - write it down on your worksheet
- Set three to five major goals
- Break each major goal into 3-5 minor goals
- Break each minor goal into 3-5 actions you can take to accomplish it

Colored Index Cards

I developed this system while playing with a stack of 3 inch by 5 inch Index Cards. For those that remember grade school math, that's 15 square inches. Instead of scraps of paper, I now use [colored 4 × 6 inch index cards](#) to build my Index Card Plans. That way, I'm adding nine square inches to the original surface area! The packages of colored index cards usually contain 4 different colors - I use the neon colors myself, although pastels are also available. When handwriting your individual Index Card Plans, I recommend using the lined side.

Whether you're going to hand write the cards, or type them up and print them out, you should use complete sentences, not sentence fragments or bullet lists. While these Index Card Plans are for you, they should still be completely understandable to anyone else who reads them. You may never want to share them (unless you have a team, or employees who are helping you accomplish the plan, in which case I strongly suggest you do share it), but having an accountability partner is very helpful for getting things done.

Since the cards are the same size as photos, and many printers can handle 4 × 6 inch stock, you can also use a word processor to write out your plans, and print them on the blank (unlined) side of the cards.

Pick one color for the main Index Card Plan, a different color for the Quarterly link, a third color for the Monthly link, and another color for the Weekly link.

Part 2 is coming next week!

That's it for now! Thanks for joining me. I hope you find our emails thought provoking.

Until next time, be well and stay healthy & happy!

Very best,

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