

Twelve step process for defining a purposeful business model and overcoming the obstacles

by Norbert Bollow <nb@deeperpurpose.coach>

Starting and then running a small business has always been challenging. In today's fast-changing world these challenges have become even greater: Your profession and the needs and expectations of the market are always changing, and much of what used to be generally-applicable good advice isn't valid anymore, and much of what works for others in your industry nevertheless won't work well enough for you.

The complexity of this challenge is greatest for business owners who also care strongly about other aspects of the business besides money and profits. Earning money and profits are always important in a business (otherwise it's a hobby, not a business), but unless many more businesses start acting on the insight that the profit motive must not be allowed to remain the only main driver of the economy, humanity will continue rushing towards various disasters. I'm thinking primarily of climate change related disasters as well as about destruction of democracy and human rights, which are essential foundations for living in a society where human dignity is upheld and protected. Therefore, nowadays, operating a business *responsibly* is about more than only about profits and economic sustainability. We must also work towards achieving carbon neutrality, we must ensure that our Internet-related and other data-related activities do not contribute to the erosion of digital privacy, and we must find some way for our business activities to make a positive contribution to the future of humanity which goes beyond merely avoiding harmful activities.

If the task of being a small business owner wasn't absolutely daunting already due to the challenges of remaining competitive and profitable in today's fast-changing world, it certainly becomes overwhelmingly daunting when other, societally also essentially important aspects are considered in addition.

However, even an overwhelming task and responsibility becomes manageable and doable when it is broken down into smaller steps. Working with the *twelve step process for defining a purposeful business model and overcoming the obstacles* will enable you move forward with confidence, step by step, building and continually improving a business that is not only profitable but also purposeful and meaningful. A business that will make your grandchildren proud of you.

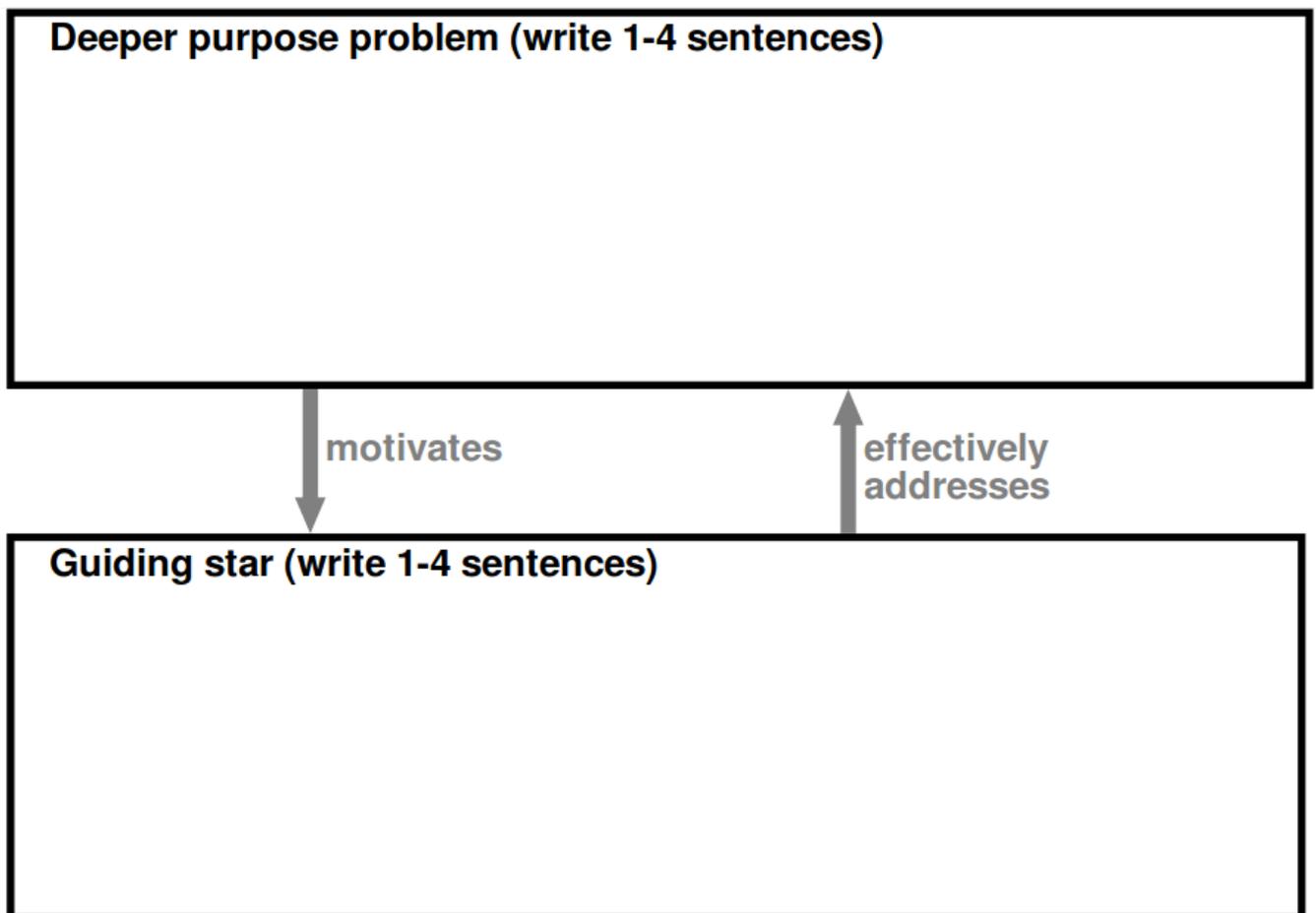
Step 1: Deeper motivation

The first step is to strengthen your understanding of your deeper motivations in relation to your business. I believe that we all have good desires and good intentions. That's an important part of being human. Alas we don't always succeed in achieving them, and in fact all too often we don't even truly try, choosing instead what seems to be an easier path. That may involve giving in to external pressures or it may involve giving in to other kinds of temptations. I propose that the first essential step towards your business becoming truly successful in every way, both in regard to the financial aspects as well as in regard to your other good desires, is to make yourself well-aware of

what is from your personal perspective truly important and meaningful about what you want to achieve.

There are several ways in which such a *deeper motivation* can possibly be expressed. One way is to state an important problem that you envision your business to contribute to solving. Another approach is to formulate a “guiding star” statement which expresses a hope and vision for the problem getting effectively addressed and/or solved.

Maybe you are already able to fill in one or both of the rectangles below?



If you have succeeded in putting your deeper motivation into words, the next step is to discuss it with a good business coach in order to further deepen your understanding and awareness. A business coach is not someone who tells you what to do; rather a business coach is someone who supports you in your thinking processes. While working with a coach, a tool like the *twelve step process for defining a purposeful business model and overcoming the obstacles* can be used to help structure the overall process in accordance to your overall objectives and strategic needs. However this is not a tool that could be used without the active support of a business coach.

An overview of the twelve-step process is available here:

<https://deeperpurpose.coach/overview12steps.pdf> .

Guidance on hiring a business coach

by Norbert Bollow <nb@deeperpurpose.coach>

The advice which I give here is probably biased, given that it comes from my perspective as a business coach who works in a certain way, but I still think that this is good advice. After all, there are reasons why I work in the way in which I work.

First of all, and this is probably the most important bit of advice, I strongly recommend that you do not allow any inner reluctance to stop you from getting the support of a business coach. For example reluctance to talk about embarrassing problems or failures. All professional coaches are strongly committed to protecting the confidentiality of the coaching conversations. The challenges of being in business in today's day and time are great enough even when you have good support. Why would you want to set yourself up for failure instead of setting yourself up for success?

You need a coach who has coaching skills at a strong professional level and who continues to improve their skills through continuing coaching-related training and/or other forms of professional skill development. If you have any doubt in relation to this about a person whom you're considering as a possible coach for you, ask them about it. You certainly don't want to hire someone who calls themselves "coach" but doesn't truly understand coaching. There are people like that. Many of them will, instead of truly coaching you, merely tell you what (they think) you should do. That isn't coaching. You want someone who knows how to empower your thinking, so that you will break through or work around whatever obstacles you face, regardless of whether the obstacles are within you or elsewhere.

Then I recommend looking for a coach whose area of specialization is a good match for the topic area which you're primarily seeking to improve. For example I work primarily on business-related topics with small business owners. Surprisingly often, it turns out that in the context of overcoming obstacles to small business success, issues in the context of the business owner's marriage or other very personal relationships come up, and we can address them. However, if relationship issues are the primary reason why you seek coaching, don't hire a business coach like me. Instead you would want to hire a coach whose focus is on relationship issues, i.e. a relationship coach. If you know that you want to focus for some time on improving some very specific aspect of your business, you might be able to find a coach who has a strong focus in that area. For example if you want to focus on improving the various interpersonal relationships which exist in the context of your business, so that those relationships are positive and restorative from the perspective of everyone who is involved, instead of draining one's energy, then I'm not the ideal coach for you, but I know someone whom I could recommend.

If a business coach is the kind of coach you want and need, ask them whether they can help you both with the very human ways in which a business owner can get stuck, and also with the large-scale strategic and systemic aspects of business. Ask them why they believe that they can help you with both kinds of aspects.

I don't recommend hiring a coach who specializes on working within a particular industry. While the coach's particular experience and perspective is not the most important aspect of coaching, it is helpful for the coach to have a broad perspective beyond the specifics of your industry.

I generally recommend planning for coaching engagements to last at least three months or (better) six months, with e.g. three sessions per month. You still retain the freedom to end the coaching relationship at any time if it doesn't work out well for you, but it is good to plan for the coaching engagement to be long enough to support making meaningful changes.

Before deciding to make someone your coach, you will want to have experienced at least a little coaching with them, so that you know that you're comfortable enough with them so that you'll be able to speak about any obstacles to the success that you seek.