

Strong Foundation

With a strong foundation, you can build anything

As a child, did you every build something from scratch and make the base too small, built the sides to differing sizes; added layers unevenly? What happened? As some point in the progression, it toppled over. All your hard work was wasted and you had to start over. Same principles apply when starting and as you grow a business. The founder of PayPal, Peter Thiel, said "A start up messed up at its foundation, cannot be fixed. "

You have to start someplace. Where to begin? I find it is always best to simplify the tasks. When thinking about starting or growing your business, I would suggest you break it down into the four key aspects of every business: operations, finance, team and brand. Symmetrical towers of the company that if built properly will create a strong footing.

Tackle the creation of each of the four pillars while keeping in mind the overall common vision of the desired outcome as each component is interrelated. Making changes to only one aspect of your business will have an impact on the others. Your base will end up lopsided. Best to step back; stop, assess and create a roadmap to follow. Use the same methodology when assessing and analyzing each area of your business. Build strategically and your foundation will level out as you move forward. When all pilings are even, you have balance and stability.

I am a process geek. My mind is wired to look and a situation; see how something needs to get done; envision the end goal while recognizing the various ways to get there. Not everyone has this skill and no one should engage in this process in a vacuum. Rely on your team for support and to

prop you (and the company) up. One fun and productive way to get everyone involved is to brainstorm, questions and not ideas. Thinking of solutions in this way sparks creativity.

Engage (not direct) your team in this technique

Write everything down

Review all questions through candid discussion and with an open mind

Refine the possible answers

As a result of this exercise, there will be lots of options, choose wisely. The answers to the questions posed will be the building blocks. Set the course, commit to it for an agreed upon period of time and do not wander. Keep an eye on the ultimate destination.

By using this technique, you have created a stable ground floor. The same process will need to be followed when you decide to take your company to the next level and reach new heights while standing strong.

Build it to stand the test of time. It took so much time to get started and moving forward you want it to be sustainable, live on long after you have moved on to something new.