



PETRA PLANNING

VOYAGER 1 HAS LEFT THE SOLAR SYSTEM



VOYAGER 1 HAS LEFT THE SOLAR SYSTEM LIFE LESSONS for BUSINESS OWNERS

"But Voyager 1 has become — thrillingly — the Little Spacecraft That Could. On Thursday, scientists declared that it had become the first probe to exit the solar system, a breathtaking achievement that NASA could only fantasize about back when Voyager was launched in 1977, the same year 'Star Wars' was released," reported The New York Times last year.

Fascinating. How in the world did they accomplish this? I dug into the story more and it turns out the answers were very familiar – set a goal, make a plan and execute.

SET A GOAL

Well-defined Mission

"The mission objective of the Voyager Interstellar Mission (VIM) is to extend the NASA exploration of the solar system beyond the neighborhood of the outer planets to the outer limits of the Sun's sphere of influence, and possibly beyond."

Like this ambitious mission of the Voyager, we coach our businesses to set a BHAG (Big Hairy Audacious Goal). This is a 10 to 30 year lofty goal that challenges you to greatness.

What are the secrets to actually executing it? Read on.

MAKE A PLAN

Operational Planning Rhythms

The Voyager team operated under a Sequence of Events (SOE) and Space Flight Operations Schedule (SFOS). Both of these are recorded by year on the Voyager website. That's over 30 years of scheduling, planning and rhythms.

Similarly, we schedule meeting rhythms – daily, weekly, bi-monthly, monthly, quarterly and annually – to create alignment where everyone knows what's going on. These meetings all have specific agendas that are effective and practical.

EXECUTE

Weekly Reports

The Voyager operations team also had a consistent list of reports that it looked at weekly. This 30-year record of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) monitored everything from propellant remaining to distance from the sun to round trip in light speed. The team paid very close attention to the data.

We encourage businesses to use KPIs to measure success. These metrics reveal to the entire organization the progress of each team member and creates accountability.

Precise Adjustments

As with any mission, especially one that goes this far and this long, adjustments had to be made. These modifications were carefully considered and performed by experts, when needed.

If something in your business isn't working, as determined by your KPIs, make a change to get back on track to reach your goal.

Expert Advice

Suzanne Dodd, project manager of the Voyager operations team, discussed bringing in experts when adjusting its strategy.

"These younger engineers can write a lot of sloppy code, and it doesn't matter, but here, with very limited capacity, you have to be extremely precise and have a real strategy," she said in The New York Times article.

She needed a rare specialist to make the adjustments on the antiquated Sun Microsystems computers. "She was able to find her man: Lawrence J. Zottarelli, 77, a retired NASA engineer. He came up with a solution."

Using the same process we use at Petra Coach, NASA was able to plan, launch and execute this phenomenal project that is still paying dividends today 30 years after it was launched.

[This story was originally published on BusinessTips.com.](#)

THE PETRA EXPERIENCE

The Petra Experience is like a Mental Marathon of focused effort to create a specific set of priorities and a planned process to achieve them... as a team.

Looking to change your business life - forever?

The daily grind of growing a business is tough... it doesn't have to be that way. We work from our own business experiences while focusing on your business – as coach and an accountability partner. We implement the Petra Process in a way that ensures it “sticks” then we stay engaged to keep you on your path to success and less frustration. We don't want this to be just another thing you start – then it gets ignored and finally dies... let's stop that cycle in your business. The Petra Program 'clarifies' what is most important to be done – by whom, by when – **AND** creates an accountability structure to ensure **IT GETS DONE.**

Gene Robinson is an entrepreneur coach with business coaching firm Petra. Visit his blog at www.petracoach.com for more business and leadership insight.

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