

SAVING A FAMILY OWNED AUTOMOBILE DEALERSHIP

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**PLAN
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THE SITUATION



White's Ford had been in operation for 60 years when the nearby Chrysler dealership went up for sale. Largely as a defensive move, the White family decided to acquire the troubled dealership, move it across the street from their long-standing Ford dealership, and ask son/nephew Lance to manage it.

Lance arrived to find the troubles ran deeper than he had expected.

THE IMPACT

Chrysler Corp had issued an edict – deliver a viable business plan or lose the dealership.

Lance's immediate mission was to stop the bleeding, so he took some quick actions, such as joining a local business networking organization, where he could begin to get the word out and receive referrals. He also determined that focusing on farm and commercial trucks was the best short-term play for the struggling dealership.

Even though these moves brought some immediate improvements, he still had to deliver a formal strategy and business plan to Chrysler, or his efforts would be for naught.

So his next move was to contact the Plan Canvas team to assist in putting together a plan that Chrysler would find acceptable.

THE RESOLUTION

Following the process, Lance first developed a strategic plan, beginning by defining the White's Chrysler Vision, Mission, and Purpose statements, as well as documenting an honest assessment of the current situation.

Next he identified long-term goals. A sample of Lance's goals from each of the 4 Plan Canvas categories is as follows:

1. **Profitability:** White's Chrysler stands on it's own and is not dependent on White's Ford to exist
2. **Customer:** People know us and know we are here
3. **Employee:** Highly competitive compensation and earning potential for "A Players"
4. **Social Responsibility:** Continue Employee Family College Funds

Based on the business foundation he had now defined, Lance developed long-term objectives and internal strategic initiatives, such as sending himself and others to the Chrysler Performance Institute Training.

Next, he identified several shorter-term objectives to include in the White's Chrysler 12-month business plan and identified actions required to achieve them. A sampling of the types of objectives he set includes:

1. Local market share
2. New and used automobile sales per month
3. Number of weeks on the lot per vehicle
4. Number of commercial sales
5. Service and parts sales
6. Service rework
7. Customer site visits

Before finalizing the plans and sending to Chrysler Corp., Lance reviewed them with his father and uncle, who approved. Next came the big test. What would Chrysler Corp. say?

The response was, "These plans look great. Now go make it happen."

THE EPILOGUE

Within one month of implementing the approved plans, White's Chrysler met Chrysler Corp. targets for the first time in a long time and continued to afterward. Lance was convinced that was no coincidence - the difference was that not only he, but the entire White's Chrysler team, now had much better focus, knew exactly what they needed to do, and purposefully tackled the plans and actions required to get there.

The exercise was so effective that, months later, when Ford also asked for a business plan, the White's were able to replicate what had been done on the Chrysler side, delivering plans in Plan Canvas form, which were subsequently accepted by Ford on the first pass.