



Getting Your Business to Peak Fitness

Peak Business Fitness

As a competitive squash player, rigorous performance analysis and trusted coaching are two critical tools that help me achieve peak performance on court and in business.

For a company to reach optimal performance its strategy and operating model should always begin with an understanding of “Why?” Are you solving a customer problem that people are willing to pay for? Do you have strong marketing and sales feedback that demonstrates that you have a product fit? Without a solid understanding of “Why” it’s hard to move on to the “What” and “How” of your company and to efficiently use precious business resources.

There are four additional questions that need to be answered. Do you have a clear milestone roadmap to achieve the next level of fitness? Do you have a team with the necessary skill sets to execute that plan, or how will you get them to join the team? What is your financial model and how does it generate consistent top and bottom line growth over time? Can you present the company effectively and confidently to investors and other stakeholders? There are other key areas like ownership of intellectual property, but none more important than the questions above.

The next step in fitness is for the company to define specific financial and governance controls that underpin the agreed strategy and operating model. A Business Fitness Program can create a performance feedback loop. As with any fitness program, you need to first assess your starting point. This scoring illustrates best practices by company stage, industry and proposed trajectory, and leads to a

series of detailed recommendations and templates to improve your business fitness score.

Business Fitness Program

A fitness program should be organized around four key areas of controls and governance:

1. Operating Controls
2. Strategic Controls
3. Values/HR Management
4. Risk Management/Role of the Board

Operating Controls monitor the current business strategy and tactics (with a one to three year horizon). By putting the appropriate controls in place, executives can monitor operating targets using key performance indicators and dashboards.

Strategic Controls govern how a company develops and monitors long-range planning (with a three to five year focus). Constant reassessment is essential given the rapid change in most industries. Management can then better scan the horizon to assess opportunities and risks in a broader context.

Values/HR Management focuses on building corporate culture and incentives. This includes how employees are hired, managed, and evaluated so that they are aligned with the company’s goals and objectives.

A Risk Management/Board of Directors program ensures that the right people are regularly evaluating and debating relevant information so the company does not expose itself to downside

business risk while effectively capitalizing on available opportunities.

Advantages of a Fitness Program Guided by Expert Coaching

Coaching allows you to apply cutting edge business theory and best practices tailored to your unique business. Information should flow seamlessly between the coach and athlete (the company), giving immediate feedback on areas of weakness in order to improve in real time. Scoreboards and dashboards can measure the operating and strategic results from your specific controls and governance practices. By gathering and measuring information, the company can better incorporate ongoing feedback.

Great coaching relationships also enable companies to strengthen their “muscles” through continuous practice and review, drawing on coaching to stay on track or accelerate the training process.

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At Marlborough Street Partners, we are not just operating executives, many of us are also athletes who understand the parallels between success in sports and business. Through the Business Fitness Program, we get on court with you as an integral part of your team.

1. We help you capture the “Why” of your business and develop a clear marketing and sales strategy supported by experienced operational measurement to drive top line growth.
2. Together we develop a milestone-driven training plan to improve the competitiveness of your business over time in all areas so that funding and the appropriate exit can be achieved. Our approach is always disciplined and accountable, producing results in specific time frames.
3. Our experience across the c-suite provides leadership to fill any gaps in your team’s skills. Teamwork is key, and our coaching network can become an integral part of your organization.
4. We make sure that your plan and capabilities improve and translate into financial top and

bottom line success. We help you take measured risks, learn, and become resilient.

5. We help you take charge on court. By presenting your company effectively and confidently, you show your competitors and investors that you are playing to win.

Continuous analysis and expert coaching are keys to success in both sports and business. The challenge lies in finding the right coach and implementing a highly tailored training regimen.

— by Jen Gabler, Principal

About MSP

Marlborough Street Partners is a team of senior operating executives that works with private equity and venture capital firms. We guide portfolio companies through their most important inflection points. Our C-level partners assess, reengineer, and when required, provide interim management to get companies on a winning trajectory.

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