

2019

Customer Engagement Strategies Leaders Use to Sustain Small Businesses

John A. Coy
Walden University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations>

 Part of the [Business Commons](#)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection at ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu.

Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

John A. Coy

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee

Dr. Rocky Dwyer, Committee Chairperson, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Janice Garfield, Committee Member, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Peter Anthony, University Reviewer, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2019

Abstract

Customer Engagement Strategies Leaders Use to Sustain Small Businesses

by

John A. Coy

MAS, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, 2004

BA, University of Florida, 1996

Consulting Capstone Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

March 2019

Abstract

The purpose of this single-case study was to explore strategies small business leaders used to engage the next generation of customers to ensure sustainability for longer than 5 years. The study population included senior leaders from a for-profit company headquartered in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Von Bertalanffy's general systems theory (GST) was the conceptual lens used in this study. Data were collected via semistructured interviews with 3 leaders of the organization. Participants for this doctoral study were members occupying leadership roles in a small, family-owned, for-profit business. Member checking was incorporated to help ensure accuracy, consistency, and credibility. Document analysis included reviews of financial statements, tax records, marketing and advertising plans, client survey information, and additional corporate artifacts. Using thematic analysis, themes emerging from this study included the importance of systematic approaches to engaging the next generation of customers through strategic processes, transparency in operations, fiscal accountability and protection of stakeholder interests, and use of technology to support business growth. Findings from this study might contribute to positive social change by enabling for-profit small business owners to succeed in their selected ventures and support local economic growth by engaging the next generation of customer.

Customer Engagement Strategies Leaders Use to Sustain Small Businesses

by

John A. Coy

MAS, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, 2004

BA, University of Florida, 1996

Consulting Capstone Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

March 2019

Dedication

I wholeheartedly dedicate this study to my best friend, my soul mate, my spouse, Julianna, for her endless love, listening, and support throughout my doctoral journey. No one accomplishes a study of this nature independently, and without her being there, I would not have ever completed this task. In addition, I dedicate this to my children and grandchildren as inspiration to show how arduous work, tenacity, and discipline pay off and enable success.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to thank my research committee chairman, Dr. Rocky Dwyer, personally, for the steadfast willingness to listen, support, criticize, correct, and mentor me along this journey. I also wish to thank committee members Dr. Jan Garfield, my second committee member, and Dr. Pete Anthony my university research reviewer for their guidance.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	v
List of Figures	vi
Section 1: Foundation of the Study.....	1
Background of the Problem	1
Problem Statement	2
Purpose Statement.....	2
Nature of the Study	3
Research Question	4
Interview Questions	4
Conceptual Framework.....	5
Operational Definitions.....	6
Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations.....	6
Assumptions.....	6
Limitations	6
Delimitations.....	7
Significance of the Study	7
Contribution to Business Practice.....	7
Implications for Social Change.....	8
A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature.....	8
Transition	36
Section 2: The Project.....	38

Purpose Statement.....	38
Role of the Researcher	38
Participants.....	39
Research Method and Design	40
Research Method	40
Research Design.....	42
Population and Sampling	43
Ethical Research.....	45
Data Collection Instruments	46
Data Collection Technique	47
Data Organization Techniques.....	48
Data Analysis	49
Reliability and Validity.....	50
Reliability.....	50
Validity	51
Transition and Summary.....	52
Section 3: Organizational Profile.....	53
Key Factors Worksheet.....	53
Organizational Description	53
Organizational Situation	60
Leadership Triad: Leadership, Strategy, and Customers	63
Leadership.....	63

Strategy	74
Customers	86
Results Triad: Workforce, Operations, and Results.....	92
Workforce	92
Operations	103
Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management.....	113
Collection, Analysis, and Preparation of Results.....	118
Product and Process Results	118
Customer Results	122
Workforce Results	126
Leadership and Governance Results	128
Financial and Market Results.....	129
Key Themes	132
Project Summary.....	135
Contributions and Recommendations	140
Section 4: Executive Summary of Key Themes	142
Project Summary.....	142
Contributions and Recommendations	142
References.....	144
Appendix A: Interview Protocol.....	177
Appendix B: Consulting Capstone 40-Week Project Timeline	179
Appendix C: Client Service Orders	190

Appendix D: DBA Research Agreement.....202

List of Tables

Table 1. Literature Review Source Content.....	9
Table 2. GSX Mission vision, and values (MVV).....	55
Table 3. GSX Regulatory Requirements	57
Table 4. GSX Key Customers’ and Stakeholders’ Requirements	58
Table 5. GSX Key Suppliers, Partners, and Collaborators	60
Table 6. GSX Workforce and Stakeholder Communication Methods	66
Table 7. GSX Key Strategic Objectives	80
Table 8. GSX Key Action Plan to Strategic Objectives Alignment	82
Table 9. GSX Leaders’ Key Work Processes Aligned to Key Requirements	104
Table 10. GSX Key Support Processes.....	107
Table 11. GSX Safety Indicators	113

List of Figures

Figure 1. GSX workforce profile	56
Figure 2. GSX key strategic advantages and challenges	62
Figure 3. GSX strategic planning process with performance improvement overlay	74
Figure 4. GSX total contracts, tables, room nights (2016-2017)	120
Figure 5. Total contracts versus cycle time and contract errors	121
Figure 6. GSX transactions versus transaction discrepancies and repeatable errors	121
Figure 7. GSX customer complaints over total contracts (2016-2017)	122
Figure 8. GSX customer rationale for annual show participation	123
Figure 9. GSX customer suggested outreach changes for the annual Show	124
Figure 10. GSX customer suggested expansion changes for the annual Show	124
Figure 11. GSX customer suggested value add changes for the annual Show	125
Figure 12. GSX customer suggested format changes for the annual Show	125
Figure 13. GSX total income and expenses versus ratio trend (2016-2018)	131
Figure 14. Prior owners' total income and expenses versus ratio trend (2010-2015)	131

Section 1: Foundation of the Study

In this section, I frame the business problem, discuss the nature of this study, and outline the methodology I used to explore strategies that business leaders use to engage the next generation of customers. The focal point is how small business owners ensure sustainability for longer than 5 years. I also justify the need for this study, which I validate through a critical review of the relevant professional literature.

Background of the Problem

For many small business leaders, there is a fine line distinguishing enduring operational success from failure. Small businesses in the United States account for a significant portion of domestic jobs, economic growth, and tax revenue (Zeuli & O'Shea, 2017). Because most small businesses fail within the first 3 to 5 years, it is incumbent on leaders to incorporate strategies that expand operations longer than this initial 5-year period (Gray & Saunders, 2016). One potential method of ensuring long-term business success is to engage younger entrepreneurs within the business structure (Doga-Mirzac, 2017). Alternatively, small business leaders could engage the next generation of customers to garner continued success. In this study, my intent was to explore strategies small business leaders use to engage the next generation of customers to ensure sustainability for longer than 5 years. By understanding how to develop strategies that engage the next consumer generation, small business leaders could promote business growth beyond 5 years.

Problem Statement

The United States Small Business Administration (SBA) surveyors asserted that small businesses in the United States account for more than 90% of total employment in the country and greater than 60% of new jobs since 2005 (SBA, 2016). However, over 30% of these businesses close within 3 years, and almost 70% of these enterprises are not open for longer than 5 years (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2016; SBA, 2016). The general business problem is that without strategies for building customer engagement that spans generations, for-profit executives lack relevant and actionable information to sustain long-term business operations. The specific business problem is that some business leaders lack strategies to engage the next generation of customers to ensure sustainability for longer than 5 years.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies business leaders use to engage the next generation of customers to ensure sustainability for longer than 5 years. The targeted population for this study consisted of business leaders from a for-profit organization in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States who successfully implemented strategies that engage the next generation of customers to sustain operations for longer than 5 years. The implications for positive social change are that my findings from this study may enable for-profit small business owners not only to succeed in their selected ventures, but also to contribute to organizational strategies that support local economic growth.

Nature of the Study

I used the qualitative method for this study. Researchers employing the qualitative method explore processes or lived experiences by asking questions about a problem versus examining relationships among research variables (Bailey, 2014). Yin (2017) noted researchers explore the *what*, *why*, and *how* about processes, lived experiences, or specific phenomenon to facilitate a qualitative assessment from the interviewees' perspectives. I studied the processes and lived experiences of my research participants that were relevant to addressing the purpose of my study; therefore, the qualitative methodology was suitable. Quantitative researchers collect and analyze data to compare or contrast differences among variables (Halcomb & Hickman, 2015). Because I did not intend to examine relationships or differences among variables, the quantitative method was not appropriate for this research study. Researchers use the mixed method to combine quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study (Yin, 2017). Researchers mesh qualitative and quantitative attributes in a mixed method study (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015). Because I did not use the quantitative method in this study, the mixed method was likewise not appropriate for my research.

I used a single-case study design for this study. In qualitative studies, researchers use phenomenology, ethnography, or case study research designs to explore indepth experiences, methods, and procedures (Yin, 2017). Researchers use phenomenological research designs to gather information from participants, specifically on participants' worldviews and lived experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Because I did not intend to describe participants' worldviews or lived experiences, the phenomenological research

design was not appropriate for this study. Researchers use ethnography to identify shared patterns of group culture, including cultural beliefs (Marion, Eddleston, Friar, & Deeds, 2015). Because I did not seek to understand shared patterns of group culture, I did not use the ethnography design. Researchers use the case study design to gather participant information in parallel with analytical inquiry, seeking common themes (Yin, 2017). Given that I sought to explore processes and lived experiences, I used the case study design to capture leaders' strategies used to engage the next generation of customers, ensuring business sustainability for longer than 5 years. A case study design was an appropriate choice to answer this doctoral study's research question.

Research Question

What strategies do business leaders use to engage the next generation of customers to ensure sustainability beyond 5 years?

Interview Questions

1. How do you determine which strategy or strategies to consider for sustaining your business by engaging future generations of customers?
2. How do you engage the next generation of customers to ensure sustainability for longer than 5 years?
3. How do you design and implement strategies to engage future generations of customers?
4. How do you use performance measures to evaluate the effectiveness of your strategies to engage the next generation of customers to ensure sustainability for longer than 5 years?

5. Based on your experiences, what are the key issues that you have addressed that likely contributed to the ongoing sustainability of your business?
6. What additional elements, comments, or information do you wish to add regarding engaging the next generation of customers to ensure sustainability for longer than 5 years?

Conceptual Framework

General systems theory (GST) served as the conceptual framework of this study. Von Bertalanffy (1972) introduced GST in the early 1930s and asserted that GST involves not only an examination of the whole of the system, but also networks and components within that system. Lewis (2015) noted that GST concepts afford researchers an understanding of a phenomenon by reviewing factors that define phenomenon interactions. Von Bertalanffy (1972) based GST on interrelationship principles and elements of the external environment and how alternative models and applications linked to the organized whole. Paucar-Caceres, Hart, Roma-Verges, and Sierra-Lozano (2016) posited that systems thinking is a way to connect independent factors to entire system relationships. Using an enhanced comprehension of systems interactions enables small business leaders to manage day-to-day operations (Wang & Wang, 2016). Systems theory consists of objects, attributes, relationships, and environments to effectively connect operational environments, corporate interactions, and organizational change (Hieronymi, 2013; von Bertalanffy, 1972). Because systems thinkers focus on process versus structure, relationships versus specific components, and systems-based processes, the GST conceptual framework was an appropriate choice for this study.

Operational Definitions

Business sustainability: A process by which business leaders manage their financial, social and environmental risks, obligations and opportunities (Manurung, 2017).

Small business: As defined by SBA (2016), a small business is an enterprise with 500 employees or fewer.

Successful small business: For this study, successful small business is defined as one operating beyond 5 years (SBA, 2016).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are researchers' beliefs considered both true and tenable, but not proven or verified (Francis, 2014). In this study, I made three assumptions. First, I assumed that a single-case study design focused on one geographic area would be appropriate for this study. Second, I assumed my study participants would provide honest, transparent, and forthright responses to all interview questions. Finally, I assumed findings from my study may be transferrable to other small businesses with similar characteristics and size.

Limitations

Limitations are potential areas of weaknesses associated with a research study (Bailey, 2018). A primary limitation of this study was the available pool of participants. Focusing on one specific small business in a defined geographic area limits overall data collection. Additionally, participant sample size potentially limits transferability of study

results to businesses of comparable size. Finally, due to the structure of Walden University's consulting capstone, I was limited in the amount of time I had access to participant information.

Delimitations

Delimitations mark the boundaries or scope of a research study (Bailey, 2018). One delimitation of my study was the business location, since I only included participants from a single organization headquartered in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. I also delimited the scope solely to strategies business leaders use to engage the next generation of customers. Finally, in this study, I included participants solely from a single small business. Multiple geographic areas, businesses greater than 500 employees, and incorporation of multiple business strategies was beyond the scope of this study.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

This study is of value to business practice because it offers qualitative assessment information to small business owners as a catalyst to drive their businesses to plan for long term survival in emerging and changing markets. Moreover, findings from this study potentially provide a basis for small business owners to operationally change business habits in specific markets. Furthermore, small business owners could gain practical insights from this study's outcomes to create a competitive advantage, promote sustainability, and expand growth.

Implications for Social Change

Pryor, Webb, Ireland, and Ketchen (2016) posited that by reducing unemployment, there are increases in competitiveness, economic growth, and overall standards of living. This study's implications for positive social change are that by reviewing, and potentially adapting, my findings, business leaders may be better positioned to not only to engage the next generation of customers, but also to enable business sustainability. Moreover, my data from this study could augment for-profit business leaders' operational strategies and processes to improve customer engagement that spans generations. The manner these owners benefit from this study links to competitive generational growth, long-term small business engagement, and corporate advances in specific markets.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

In this qualitative single-case study I explored customer engagement strategies that small, family-owned business leaders use to sustain operations beyond 5 years. My problem statement, purpose statement, central research question, and conceptual framework formed the underpinnings that set the foundation for this review of the professional and academic literature.

I used Walden University's library and Google Scholar to locate relevant articles for this literature review. Databases used, in alphabetical order (and not order of precedence) included: ABI/INFORM, Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, EBSCOHost, Emerald Management, ProQuest, PsycARTICLES, SAGE, SAGE Journals, and ScienceDirect. Key search terms included *systems theory*, *general*

systems theory, for-profit, small business, business failure, business success, business challenges, family owned, sustainability, regulatory environment, compliance, strategy, marketing, advertising, succession, workforce, and governance. Requirements in Walden’s Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program stipulate that 85% of all sources referenced are published within the past 5 years. This requirement ensures that the material is a representative sampling of both recent and up-to-date information. I cited 153 sources in the literature review, 150 (98% of the sources cited) are recent (92% peer-reviewed scholarly research articles) sources published between 2014 and 2018 (Table 1).

Table 1

Literature Review Source Content

Literature review content	Total #	# Within 5-year range (2014-2018)	% Total peer-reviewed within 5-year range (2014-2018)
Books	1		
Peer-reviewed articles	143	128	89.5
Dissertations	0		
Online resources	2	2	
Total	146	130	89

Informed Consent

Hetzel-Riggin (2017) identified ill-formed processes within informed consent procedures that may affect data collection. However, by incorporating risk mitigation modifications into the informed consent process, researchers can minimize overall data quality bias. One such mitigation initiative is to have comprehensive informed consent procedures (Hetzel-Riggin, 2017). In addition, informed consent is an ethical process that (a) should occur before research participant engagement, (b) has risks, and (c) requires contributor comprehension at onset (Adams et al., 2017). Given that research involves an

ethical process, data collection should not take priority over the well-being of those participating in the study, and researchers must afford participants the ability to step away from the study if requested. Researchers should not blur the lines between personal research studies, participants rights, and ethical decisions. One way to formalize this procedure is through an ethical review process that includes both a verbal and written medium (Adams et al., 2017).

Informed consent, if transparent, properly structured, and monitored can positively affect research studies because it aids in safeguarding participant confidentiality. In studies on medical ethics, Oye, Sorenson, and Glasdam (2016) posited that qualitative researchers had fewer ethical dilemmas, both written and verbal, if research procedures went through an oversight board. One method of supporting the informed consent process is through oversight and by providing historical, background information before participant contribution. Moreover, researchers need a well-documented process covering participant consent, data collection, and information release that specifically gives the participants priority with their rights both before and during any research study (Lie & Witteveen, 2017).

Walden University has a Research Ethics and Compliance department that manages the University's Institution Review Board (IRB) whose members ensure ethical research compliance at the university, state, and federal level. Walden's IRB facilitates proof of informed consent via a formalized IRB application and vetting process. I secured IRB approval (#09-19-17-0666468) for this study so I could collect and analyze data from senior leader interviews, public data and literature, and internal site documents and

data (see Walden, 2017). Findings from my study may heighten awareness in for-profit leaders of the informed consent process.

General Systems Theory

Von Bertalanffy (1950) developed the framework for the GST in the late 1920s. Coining the term systems theory, von Bertalanffy (1953) proposed that independent parts of a structure contribute wholesale to an entire system. Throughout the 1930s, approaches to system theory advanced the thinking and perspectives on theoretical inclusion into additional fields of study (von Bertalanffy, 1953). Looking to bridge the divide between biology and physics, von Bertalanffy (1953) looked at independent processes as they related to a systematic whole. Although initially proposed to combine scientific disciplines, particularly biology and physics, GST attributes are widely applicable in other fields of study such as business. For instance, McManners (2016) used the systems theory framework in an aviation case study on sustainability, and Adams, Hester, Bradley, Meyers, and Keating (2014) incorporated aspects of GST into the environmental science sector.

Von Bertalanffy (1953; 1968) expanded systems theory by examining linkages between relationships, goals, problems, and perspectives with a focus on understanding the process both internal and external to explored systems. With this expansion, von Bertalanffy (1953; 1968) framed sets of objects as the system, and turned attention to clarifying and comprehending complex relationships and phenomena between elements. Furthermore, while researching relationships between organizational wholes, von Bertalanffy (1968) focused attention on singularities within systems as contributions to

the common elements of the group. Caws (2015) solidified these developments and advances in GST using the lens of all-inclusive systems using science to bring relationships and structures together. Additional advances for GST included refinement in recognizing and reporting on interactions between systems (Caws, 2015).

Objects, attributes, internal relationships, and system environments are all pivotal components of GST (von Bertalanffy, 1968). A system is a series of objects that interlink to attain a specific goal and potentially convert information to achieve the said outcome (Broks, 2016). Tenants of GST continue to advance, and growth into emerging fields continue to solidify both values and assumptions of the theory. Although more recent theorists have shortened the name to *systems theory*, their focus remains on collected systems, interconnected parts, and perpetual change between systems and the interrelated parts that comprise the entire structure (Broks, 2016). Recently, Rousseau (2015) contended that this theory could expand discussion in numerous academic fields, including the field of behavioral science. Specifically, systems focused on both objective and subjective properties, along with relational approaches to an organization as a whole, can benefit from a systems theory approach (Rousseau, 2015). In this study, I used GST as the conceptual framework to explore how for-profit leaders use strategies to engage the next generation of customers to ensure sustainability for longer than 5 years. In this exploration, I focused on elements and systems both internal and external to the organization that potentially affect these groupings. I also believe that, as a foundational theory, GST was a good fit not only to gain insight on sustainability strategies, but also on how systems and subsystems within an organization link or depend on each other.

Alternatives to GST. Two alternatives to GST include the observe, orient, decide, and act (OODA) model and the plan, do, study, and act (PDSA) quality improvement model. Although initially developed for overall awareness in military operations, the OODA model is applicable in numerous areas including supply chain, logistics, human resources, and consumer relations (Vagle, 2016). While a focal point of GST is the interaction between systems, OODA integrates applications and processes across tasks (Vagle, 2016). The integration in this model complements GST, particularly regarding the ways business personnel solve problems. Furthermore, OODA modeling accounts for control structures, including assessment, decision-making, and knowledge, similar to relational approaches in the GST framework (Miller & Clark, 2016). In contrast, GST emphasizes linkages between relationships and structures together, whereas OODA stresses applied decision-making (Caws, 2015; Vagle, 2016). In their research on OODA modeling, Miller and Clark (2016) identified the importance of feedback and repetitive looping in this process.

The PDSA quality improvement model, like both GST and OODA, is cyclical by design, is observation-based, and has a feedback mechanism (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015). Although focused on improving patient care, Donnelly and Kirk (2015) identified PDSA as a quality improvement model directly tied to organizational change management. As an alternative to GST, those incorporating the PDSA model can systematically review the independent pieces, or tasks, of this model and tend to follow the steps sequentially. Also seeking improved patient care, Wolf, Doane, and Thompson (2015) identified PDSA as a quality improvement model that could enhance recovery after surgical procedures. By

coupling PDSA procedures with a quality improvement checklist, doctors noted improvement across the continuum of patient care (Wolf et al., 2015). Further, in their study focused on improving patient handover during the admissions process, Luther, Hammersley, and Chekairi (2014) identified PDSA as a business model that could both improve and streamline patient processing. In all three of these studies, organizations used the PDSA model to implement change within an organization.

Small Business

A small business is one that usually has less than 500 employees. In 2016, these enterprises accounted for 56.8 million employees, 99.7% of all businesses, and almost 50% of those employed in the United States (SBA, 2016). The SBA (2016) further delineates small businesses as those enterprises organized for-profit or not-for-profit; are operated and owned independently; and identified and varied by industry. Typically, owners run small businesses as partnerships, S-Corporations, or sole proprietorships, and their leaders follow specific tax guidelines (Pugna, Miclea, Negrea, & Potra, 2016; SBA, 2016).

Small businesses account for a sizeable portion of all operations within a nation, and leaders of these organizations control resources such as human and physical capital (Campbell & Park, 2017). Regardless of the various definitions of a business and the variance between employee level and total assets, these organizations both grow and stabilize national economies (Leonidou, Christodoulides, Kyrgidou, & Palihawadana, 2017). Celec and Globocnik (2017) posited that smaller firms are contributors to national economies and sources of economic development. Revenue generation is a prime reason

to engage in small business operations. As business income exceeds operational expenses, profits increase, which potentially drives success (Baumol, 2015).

Success. Myriad factors determine small business success versus failure including human capital retention, the financial inflow of capital, marketing, advertising, and strategic planning (Anis, Maha Ayadi, & Mohamed Amine, 2015; Turner & Endres, 2017). In their study of business success in small to medium-sized enterprises, Pletnev and Barkhatov (2016) identified both responsible management and the ability to produce profit as determinants of success. In family-run enterprises, social well-being can affect success factors, yet domestic factors are more straightforward to influence (Pletnev & Barkhatov, 2016). Internal family aspects aside, government influence, economic factors, and fiscal resources contribute to overall business success. Although these items are success factors or potential indicators of accomplishment, goal measurement and attainment also influences small business leaders' actions in positive manners.

Small business leaders can influence successful business outcomes. Anis et al. (2016) found that small wins in business events lead to increases in accessible capital, and that these resources tend to drive innovative thought. Innovative actions further contribute to the operational success and economic upticks, or stability, which is another small business success factor (Anis et al., 2016; Barkhatov, Pletnev, & Campa, 2016). Small business leaders can plan for success, and planning strategies incorporating positive employee associations, detailed customer interactions, increased expectations, and adapting to change lean towards success versus failure (Luckmann & Feldmann, 2017). Focusing on positive associations and themes, Seaton, Waggoner, and Alexander

(2015) posited that hope, primarily centered on small business leaders' attitudes, is a compelling motivation and success tool. Alternatively, Mazzei, Flynn, and Haynie (2016) linked small business success factors to high-performance work practices and innovative procedures.

Specific work practices afford small business leaders long-term success, including human capital retention, innovative hiring practices, and collaborative employee engagement (Mazzei et al., 2016). Moreover, the second and third order of effects via retaining successful and innovative personnel include increased product output, better decisions, higher levels of morale, and decreased turnover (Mazzei et al., 2016). Another category of small business performance and success is the overall personal perception of success. Lekovic and Maric (2015) studied personal perception factors aligned with small to medium-sized enterprise success advantages and asserted personal perception indicators as measurable and realistic. In their study of small business performance and success measures, Lekovic and Maric (2015) emphasized that perception indicators are as important as traditional success measurements such as small business financial measurements. Another relevant small business success factor is increased economic attainment via robust e-commerce actions (Ghobakhloo, Hong, & Standing, 2015). Increased e-commerce activities affect both financial and operational performance, and these actions are beneficial to continued business leader commitment (Ghobakhloo et al., 2015). However, not all small business actions lead to success, and failures require critical assessment.

Failure. Not many small businesses are successful because approximately 50% fail within 5 years, and 30% only remain operational at the 10-year point (Hibbler-Britt & Sussan, 2015). Survival rates may improve over time as businesses continue past the 5-year point, and a national economy may not drive success or failure (SBA, 2016). Potential failure factors during the early stage of small business start-ups include decreased funding, poor management skills, lack of strategic planning, and an inability of leaders to retain human capital (Bennett, 2016). Prior leadership experience in running a small business aids success and the ability to innovate can lead operations through crises (Bennett, 2016; Beqiri, 2014). Bennett (2016) and Beqiri (2014) further attested that certain pivotal requirements and competencies are essential for long-term business success, especially if these are in place at the onset of operations. Focusing on innovation, Manso (2017) identified that with the pace of technological innovation, small business owners inherently accept risk-taking as a portion of business operations by not keeping with the pace of these advancements, which long-term leads to potential operational failures versus success. Long-term human capital stability, via extended contracts, also lends to success versus areas of business failure (Manso, 2017).

If strategic planning, to include a detailed focus on specific business strategies, is not accomplished, decreased corporate fiscal performance ensues (Bennett, 2016; Mellat-Parast, Golmohammadi, McFadden, & Miller, 2015). Diminished financial performance, linked to unstable local economies compounded by increased unemployment, is another business failure indicator (Sassen, 2016). Monelos, Sanchez, and Lopez (2014) while assembling evidence for small to medium-sized business failure forecast models, attested

fiscal performance as a prime business failure indicator. Further failure gauges include delayed monetary payments, acceptance of decreased employee qualifications, and a lack of quality standards (Monelos et al., 2014). In addition to the fiscal side of small business failure, deficiencies in comprehending growth, operational procedures, management processes, understanding market space and market share, and consumer purchasing habits also lead to small business closures (Cavan, 2016; Choi, Rupasingha, Robertson, & Green Leigh, 2017; Luo & Stark, 2015).

Increased competition, decreased sales, poor location, and diminishing technology are additional ties to small business failures (Choi et al., 2017; Franca, de Aragao Gomes, Machado, & Russo, 2014). In their multicase study on small business failure linkages to information technology and communication, Franca et al. (2014) identified poor customer service; lack of creativity and innovative change; and obsolete technology as ties to business failure. By incorporating transformational business practices, implementing innovative technology, and limiting physical asset purchases, smaller firm leaders may push business survival past 5 years (Franca et al., 2014). Moreover, by understanding business failure pitfalls, prior to the onset of enterprise closure is also critical (Coad, 2014). Specific variables define failure in the business sector; researchers can measure these variables and provide foundations for success versus failure determinates (Scherger, Vigier, & Barbera-Marine, 2014; Wang, Gopal, Shankar, & Pancras, 2015). By comprehending reasons for failure, company leaders may stave off business closure and push the organization toward enduring successful operations; including family-owned small businesses.

Family-Owned Businesses. Kavediya (2017) identified a family-owned business as one that has both control and ownership via a family unit. Alternative definitions highlight a family-owned small business as one in which a preponderance of management and ownership is derived from the family and crosses from family lines to external human capital (Blanco-Mazagatos, de Quevedo-Puente, & Delgado-Garcia, 2016; Larraz, Gene, & Pulido, 2017). In their study regarding productivity within family-owned businesses, Larraz et al. (2017) sampled over 5,000 family-run firms. Larraz et al. identified unique differences between family-owned versus nonfamily-run organizations. A crucial difference centered on enterprise self-financing and the amount of money paid to family staff members (Larraz et al., 2017). Reilly (2016) expanded on family goodwill and financial payouts to emphasize family-owned business leaders tended to overvalue fiscal payouts.

There are additional emphasis points regarding family-owned businesses including human resource challenges, operational management, and succession initiatives. While studying family-owned business perceptions, O'Brien, Minjock, Colarelli, and Yang (2017) asserted family members received preferential treatment compared to their nonfamily-member counterparts. Furthermore, if not addressed these privileged relationships negatively affect the overall work environment (O'Brien et al., 2017). Sinha, Pandey, and Varkkey (2017) focused on the human resource challenges in family-owned organizations, determining concerns of the family placed over the nonfamily-employees.

Family traditions, including the hiring of family members over more qualified, nonfamily-talent, turned away experienced and eligible personnel (Sinha et al., 2017). Bogers, Boyd, and Hollensen (2015) added to this analysis in their study of family-owned business asserting families playing pivotal roles in business; however, external influences may exceed family processes. Furthermore, Devins and Jones (2016) identified that family-owners, when confronted with specific business issues, tend to shy away from coping with the issue and turn to gathering additional information or ignoring the concern altogether.

Governance. Corporate governance is not solely a large business leader's responsibility, small business leads, especially those running start-ups, require a sound governance structure too. While studying corporate governance in family-owned enterprises, Abyad (2016) identified incorporation methods, succession, compensation, financing, and ownership structures as key governance focal points. Although policy and regulatory monitoring provide governance oversight, small business leaders need to take an active role in regulatory decision-making (Abyad, 2016). Regulatory decision-making roles should include external involvement as small business owners and leaders are not typically members of organizations representing their interests (Zondi, 2016). Interestingly, Zondi (2016) further posited that dialoguing with competitors and increased levels of self-confidence were pivotal roles in small business self-governance.

Additional considerations for small business governance include environmental considerations, such as social responsibility, and detailed fiscal considerations, such as auditing tasks (Mahdavi & Daryaei, 2017). Socha and Majda-Kariozen (2017) in their

research of European small business enterprises identified direct relationships between financial performance, business leadership control, and governance procedures. Just as strategic operations require a strategic plan, so too does governance over fiscal reporting. As experience increases in small business procedures, oversight of key management, financial, and governance processes also grows (Ekanayake & Kuruppuge, 2017).

Another mechanism to manage governance processes within small business operations is via knowledge management software and networks (Ko & Liu, 2017). Moreover, Lee and Han (2016) in their research on small businesses within the logistics sector solidified ties between small business governance procedures and stable fiscal performance. Reporting structures and organizational transparency are additional governance best practices. Furthermore, ethical operations rank high on consumer considerations and are focal points for small business leaders, especially for those garnering public and stakeholder trust (Blodgett, Eonas, Melconian, & Peterson, 2014). Small, family-owned firm oversight also includes fiscal considerations, and leaders of these organizations require direct input in these areas ensuring direct linkages to sound programs and policy (Ciampi, 2015). Luan, Chen, Huang, and Wang (2017) in their studies on family businesses identified direct linkages between succession planning and governance oversight.

Succession Planning. Although one of the more critical pieces in the business continuity of operations, succession planning is in the background of many business leaders' activities. Roth, Tissot, and Goncalves (2017) asserted that a pivotal family-owned small business governance risk centered on poor succession planning between

family generations. In family-owned and operated businesses, succession planning initiatives shape a portion of operations to those carrying on as business successors (Ghee, Ibrahim, & Abdul-Halim, 2015). A central piece of succession planning is to develop current personnel within an organization to fill key management and leadership positions. Ghee et al. (2015) attested in family-owned businesses both relationships, and leadership styles affect the overall succession experience. Mokhber et al. (2017) also researched succession planning in small to medium enterprises, and they concluded that prior preparation and personal family relationships were pivotal for smooth succession transitions.

Preparation factors for business succession include operations, finances, performance, and personnel management, and leadership should include these into both short-term and long-term planning goals (Mokhber et al., 2017). Focusing on leadership succession, Berns and Klarner (2017) further identified critical factors regarding transition, which included corporate governance, strategic planning, and management procedures. In addition, if company leaders identify and address succession touchpoints early in the strategic planning process, and manage these over dedicated time, succession planning is easier to manage (Devins & Jones, 2016). Where plans of this nature tend to fail is when leaders do not address pivotal discussion points until issues are paramount to transition success. It is important to highlight the requirement to identify who is completing the succession planning process, and effective planning affects corporate goals, strategy, and profitability (Reardon, 2018; Smith, 2015).

Hopkins, Lipin, and Whitham (2014), while working with clients on succession planning, identified a need for digital succession plans for small business owners. By documenting not only financial plans, but also all assets in a digital format, small business owners have a more accurate representation of all transition elements (Hopkins et al., 2014). Another crucial aspect of succession planning is ensuring the retention of experienced human capital within the company to carry on current operations (Baker, 2017). By retaining trained talent, the flow of management and corporate knowledge eases some of the succession burdens in smaller, family-owned businesses (Muskat & Zehrer, 2017). One recommendation is for business leaders to design these transition plans early in operations; they should include key leaders and partners and provide a detailed assessment of all company assets (Nissan & Eder, 2017). Succession planning, if carried out in a detailed and systematic manner, is a positive professional experience and potentially drives increased, sustained, long-term financial performance (Patidar, Gupta, Azbik, & Weech-Maldonado, 2016).

Sustainability. Sustainability in the context of business has numerous meanings; in one aspect it is linked to corporate social responsibility, or going green, whereas, in other facets, it ties to sustaining business operations long-term (Amir, 2017; Warren & Szostek, 2017). Sustaining business operations also covers various factors such as finances and performance; innovation; technology and communications; and management practices (Alonso-Almeida, Bagur-Femenias, Llach, & Perramon, 2018; Francis & Willard, 2016; Johnson, Faight, & Long, 2017). While exploring sustainable business practices in small tourism businesses, Alonso-Almedia et al. (2018) linked success

factors to areas of quality service and fiscal performance. As a preponderance of all businesses globally are small to medium enterprises, it is vital for small business owners and leaders to comprehend long-term sustainability factors. Prime business functions are to grow the company and sustain long-term success, which is a significant challenge for managers (Johnson et al., 2017).

Other areas of strategic sustainment include marketing and advertising, along with the benefits social media marketing brings to business survival (Taneja & Toombs, 2014). While researching the promotion of social media marketing into business practices, Taneja and Toombs (2014) uncovered several relevant facts between long-term operational sustainability and the inclusion of social media marketing strategies. A prime area of relevance for small business sustainment included social media marketing to best competition, promote current business operations, and differentiation initiatives to survive long-term (Taneja & Toombs, 2014). Turning to the human capital side of business sustainability, Burch et al. (2016) attested that small to medium enterprises within the private sector should focus on both sustainable governance and personnel expertise. Investing in personnel, as well as long-term and human capital talent retention, is one path to sustain business operations (Burch et al., 2016).

Continuing with the human capital retention aspect of long-term business sustainability, personnel pay is another significant operating expense. Hanim Rusly, Yakimin Abdul Talib, and Salleh (2017) in their research on minimum wage increases posited increased salary payout significantly affects corporate operations and long-term business sustainability. In this instance, business leaders would shift focus from day-to-

day operations toward longer-term impacts including potential increases in pay. Sustaining business operations and growth includes leader's involvement in risk reduction; knowledge of procedures and practices; and sound fiscal management (Warren & Szostek, 2017). Even armed with this information, the odds are against small business survival past the 5-year point (SBA, 2016). However, the business regulatory structure may aid both successful and sustainable operations.

Regulatory Environment. Local, state, and national regulations affect small and large businesses alike; however, depending on the specific regulatory measure this affects small businesses at an increased level versus their large business counterpart. Ajayi (2016) while studying political, legal, and economic environments on small enterprises identified regulatory involvement profoundly influences smaller businesses and depending on the area of intervention, it affects wholesale business operations. Kitching, Hart, and Wilson (2015) attested many regulatory influences on small business operations were burdensome and negatively affected corporate performance. Performance issues touched on human capital, business relations, and managerial influences (Kitching et al., 2015). Lewis, Richard, and Corliss (2014) further solidified compliance with government regulation, including resource expenditures for oversight, was both costly to business and potentially inhibited operational performance.

A portion of regulatory oversight links to compliance and transparency; however, for small business owners, implementation comes at a cost (Lewis et al., 2014). Just as organizational leaders strategically plan for many small business expenditures, so too should they plan for regulatory environment actions. In fact, depending on the level of

financial capital expended small businesses are significantly affected by regulatory changes (Brasoveanu & Petronela, 2014). Interestingly, Rahman (2014) while studying business regulatory environment and entrepreneurial opportunities concluded that specific regulatory factors, specifically those tied to economic changes, were potentially threatening to overall small business success. Regulatory initiatives tied to external investment measures diminishes operational success within small businesses (Rahman, 2014). Due to the sheer number of small businesses globally, regulatory change both defends and burdens these enterprises.

S Corporation. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) identifies an S corporation as a business company type taxed under federal code, and one that is typically run by a group of personnel authorized to act as a single entity (U.S. Department of the Treasury. Internal Revenue Service [IRS], 2018). There are benefits for businesses to create as an S corporation, such as double taxation avoidance; however, there are specific establishment requirements too (IRS, 2018). Business owners of S corporations must follow specific requirements, potentially have certain tax consequences during annual filing, and are tax benefit ineligible if they do not follow the specified IRS code (Toner, 2015; Toner, 2016; & Toner, 2017a). Toner (2017b) additionally asserted that S corporation business owners should fully understand the tax code the business falls under and there are specific ways to increase pure capital.

Kinkaid and Federanich (2017) in their research on S corporations identified the importance of stock purchases, corporate equity, and net income as outlined in IRS provisions. Furthermore, if S corporation leaders comprehend IRS rulesets for these

entities, they alleviate potential audits and IRS scrutiny (Kirkland, 2015). Moreover, if small business S corporations elect to liquidate their enterprise, the IRS recommends reviewing U.S. Internal Revenue Code (Fall, 2017). Finally, it is incumbent on S corporation leaders to remain engaged in current codes and regulations because the IRS has both formal and informal rules that pertain to these entities (Hall III, Kugler, & Harris, 2017).

Department of Revenue (Federal and State). As federal and state linkages to the IRS are extremely broad topics, I did not delve deeply into this topic. However, I did believe it was essential to cover a few items related to the department of revenue and small, family-owned family businesses. Biggart and Harden (2015) identified a prime item that burdens small businesses is health insurance regulatory requirements. In addition, there are both legal and economic requirements that significantly affect how small business owners' set up their firms (Chen & Qi, 2016). Nevius (2017) highlighted that it is imperative for leaders of small businesses to comprehend IRS guidance pertaining to tax provisions geared toward small business eligibility and liability. Small business owners require awareness in both federal and state department of revenue concerns to ensure legality coverage in these areas.

Customer Relations Management

Within business, customer relations include specific areas such as marketing, advertising, human capital, strategy, engagement, and more. While researching consumer influence, Plouffe, Bolander, Cote, and Hochstein (2016) identified marketing effectiveness as detailed bidirectional transactions between the business and its

customers. To remain effective the business marketing team and product consumers require close, strong relationships (Plouffe et al., 2016). Khalifa and Saad (2017) in their studies on customer-service provider dealings highlighted the importance of long-term client relationships as a crucial aspect of business operations. In fact, Khalifa and Saad (2017) concluded that organizational leaders that develop mature and trusting client associations tend to have customers with increased levels of trust for their business. Comprehending consumer needs, specifically in social network engagements, increases brand identity and loyalty (Chiang, Wei, Parker, & Davey, 2017).

Braun, Hadwich, and Bruhn (2017) posited that there are direct ties to successful marketing initiatives and overall customer engagement. In addition, Braun et al. (2017) concluded that customer retention increases if interactions, either product or service, provide additional engagement between the consumer and business personnel. Maklan, Antonetti, and Whitty (2017) attested that organizational leaders struggle with managing the customer experience aspect of the business. Furthermore, with increased social media accessibility, customer relationship management and engagement are a crucial aspect of a successful business strategy (Paliouras & Siakas, 2017). In fact, in their studies on social customer relationship management, Paliouras and Siakas (2017) concluded social media relationships between business employees and customers is an inexpensive yet valuable way to engage consumers in the market space. Finally, Colta and Nagy (2017) identified that overall customer experience is influenced by all business to consumer touchpoints and sound management policies in this area aids to increased customer loyalty.

Engagement. Small business leaders and their employees have numerous methods to engage with current and potential customers. A crucial engagement method is via social media, and social media branding can induce consumer-spending habits (Carlson, Rahman, Voola, & De Vries, 2018). Depending on direct or indirect monitoring, social media platforms provide consumer engagement via collaboration and product feedback (Carlson et al., 2018). Braun et al. (2017) while examining customer interactions found both product and service quality affects consumer engagement and preserves current customers. Mohd-Ramly and Omar (2017) studied customer engagement experiences in the retail sector and identified product quality, employee-to-customer communications, and overall business atmosphere were positive engagement opportunities. In fact, Mohd-Ramly and Omar (2017) concluded positive engagement actions before point-of-sale purchases are a vital factor in long-term business operations. Alternatively, Thakur (2018) posited that business leaders could interact with customers post purchase using online product review engagement strategies.

In earlier work, Thakur (2016) investigated mobile devices as an engagement strategy and concluded mobile device usage was a viable method to both engage customers and track overall purchase experience. Alternatively, Zhang, Hu, Guo, and Liu (2017) attested that product word-of-mouth was still a sound customer engagement strategy and that this method spilled over into broader community engagement tactics. While exploring customer engagement strategies within social network communities, Chiang et al. (2017) identified social media as a favorable engagement opportunity. Business leaders incorporating marketing strategies that included consumer engagement

approaches had increased positive customer support perceptions (Li & Wang, 2017).

Reviewing global opportunities, MacGillavry and Sinyan (2016) identified the importance of listening to customers via employee-consumer engagement dialogues to foster business growth.

Goyal and Srivastava (2015) studied customer engagement models and posited that firms with leaders implementing a direct engagement strategy, such as face-to-face or telephone, secured a broader customer base and realized increased profits.

Mpinganjira's (2016) solidified the pros of engagement strategies with her study on consumer engagement in online communities, where she concluded that successful managers are directly involved in customer engagement, including online mediums.

There are associations between increased levels of customer satisfaction to engagement activities, and these events link to product commitment, loyalty, and company trust

(Youssef, Johnston, Abdel-Hamid, Dakrory, & Seddick, 2018). Islam and Rahman (2016)

also concluded direct customer engagement leads to increases in consumer trust and direct management of engagement strategies solidifies positive customer-company

involvement. Reviewing the various facets of customer engagement opportunities, a common thread emerged which was the requirement of strategy implementation within the process.

Strategy. Small business leaders, just like their large business counterparts, should formulate an effective business strategy before commencing operations. The initial business strategy would include people, operations, finances, marketing, advertising, and competition (Parnell, Long, & Lester, 2015). Parnell et al. (2015)

identified linkages between small business performance and both strategy and strategic business capabilities. Leonardi (2015) asserted there are several challenges for business leaders when moving from the strategy formulation phase to the strategy implementation phase. Methods to mitigate risks associated with these challenges include comprehending that formulation and implementation work together, and incorporating technology augments strategic implementation (Leonardi, 2015). Business leaders may also shift operational strategies after securing a niche in their current market space (Parnell et al., 2015).

Nouicer, Zaim, and Abdallah (2017) while studying customer-oriented strategy on a global scale found strategic, operational performance increased with transparent business operations and consumer-focused retention activities. Moreover, committed leaders regarding strategy formulation initiatives also supported potential success areas such as countering competition and advancing technology (Nouicer et al., 2017). Regarding domestic versus overseas small business expansion, Shohei (2016) concluded with a proper expansion strategy, financial resources, and management oversight businesses can grow and develop in overseas markets. An additional strategy formulation item to consider for international expansion is the impact of culture and for business leaders to have a process to comprehend various cultural aspects (Beyene, Sheng, & We, 2016). To both mitigate risk and ensure long-term sustainable operations, small business owners need to develop and monitor strategy that accounts for business growth and change over time.

Social media. Small businesses seeking to survive operationally need to use everything available to ensure success. Balan and Rege (2017) identified in their study on social media usage in small businesses that owners of small firms should comprehend the importance of social media and the analytics tied to social media platforms. Furthermore, small business leaders also need to understand the importance of including social media analysis into their overall business goals (Balan & Rege, 2017). Moreover, when outlining long-term operational goals, organizational leaders would include social media usage in both business marketing and advertising actions. Broekemier, Chau, and Seshadri (2015) concluded that social media inclusion in marketing initiatives affected customer-to-business actions and if effective has the potential to increase the firm's consumer base. If used strategically, including in the small business owner's strategy and vision, social media is a sound marketing tool (Hassan, Nadzim, & Shiratuddin, 2015). Social media platforms additionally aid small business leaders in consumer data collection, product selection, and direct feedback (Broekemier et al., 2015; Hassan et al., 2015).

Jones, Borgman, and Ulusoy (2015) in their study of the impact of social media on small business concluded social media usage was advantageous in increasing brand awareness, consumer contact, and geographic product saturation. By using social media as an outreach tool, small business leaders can engage with customers in a more substantial geographic area and communicate to potential customers on a larger scale versus those companies not using social media (Jones et al., 2015). Furthermore, Schaupp and Belanger (2014) attested the value of social media inclusion in small business

operations goes beyond marketing and advertising because it affects both current and future processes. Interestingly, social media inclusion in day-to-day operations is not solely an investment, but one that requires daily input and management (Burgess, Sellitto, Cox, Buultjens, & Bingley, 2017).

Marketing. Marketing is not just a concept in a small business strategic plan; it fills a significant small business product role. As technology advances globally, marketing leaders must keep pace with these advances to ensure operational support. One way to support business marketing plans via technological advances is through digital marketing (Karatum, 2017). Digital marketing, as a subset of traditional marketing actions, provides an alternative method to reach potential customers, understand current consumer requirements, and possibly secure a competitive business niche (Karatum, 2017; Mogos, 2015). As small businesses are the preponderance of all enterprises globally, it is imperative for these firms to have a sound, technology-based marketing plan (Aksoy, 2017; SBA, 2016).

Alford and Page (2015) studied 24 owner-managed small businesses and identified a need for marketing technology and technology-based marketing provides market opportunities to these small business leaders. Another emerging use of digital marketing is in acquiring human capital, and this technique affords potential talent availability outside current business geographic areas (Boitmane & Blumberga, 2016). By incorporating technology into corporate marketing plans, business leaders garner both consumer information and possible product expansion areas (Odoom, Narteh, & Boateng, 2017). Marketing initiatives require resources and business leaders should weigh costs

associated with investing in marketing versus acquiring human capital, advertising, and additional operational expenses (Pugna et al., 2016). Gerhardt, Hazen, and Lewis (2014) affirmed successful small business marketing strategy augments total sales, and as an income multiplier, successful marketing techniques can enhance company growth and increase revenue.

Advertising. Within business operations, advertising tends to go together with marketing; however, advertising initiatives do require an independent business focus. With the onset and expansion of digital marketing, small business advertising is not at the forefront of all business owners plans and contemporary trends are shifting from spending on advertising to supporting marketing (Cole, DeNardin, & Clow, 2017). In fact, in Cole's et al. (2017) study on marketing and advertising trends in small service businesses, the authors concluded digital marketing took precedence over advertising, and that inclinations in leaders' views were shifting from advertising as revenue generation to a pure business expense. One area where advertising is currently thriving in small to medium businesses is in online advertising; however, this requires both a dedicated budget and persistent monitoring (Balteanu & Marcu, 2015). Just as small business owners develop and maintain websites for digital marketing so too should they maintain advertising, with specific branding focus, on the same site (Beachboard, 2017). Furthermore, organizational leaders that engage in advertising practices via electronic platforms tend to connect with their customers in increased levels (Durieux Zucco, Riscarolli, de Quadros, & Kock, 2017).

Along with incorporating advertising into a strategic business plan, company leaders can also focus advertising strategy on business strengths, product, brand, and consumer recognition and trust (Velly, Sunitarya, & Vinda, 2016). Zhang, Liang, and Wang (2016) further identified the need for advertising strategies to incorporate items that increase perceived consumer value. Increases in value perception include customer anticipation, product expectancy, merchandise value, branding, and consumer trust (Velly et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2016). Hirvonen, Laukkanen, and Salo (2016) studied branding in small business including the linkages to company growth and expansion. A theme from Hirvonen et al.'s (2016) study was the correlation between marketing, branding, advertising, and consumer relations. The relationships between these areas showed the more a potential customer was familiar with a brand, possibly through marketing and advertising practices, the more there was the ability for increased business growth (Hirvonen et al., 2016).

Workforce. In business, the workforce is human capital currently or potentially working for the organization and Mayo (2015) attested that workforce planning is a strategic event. In addition, workforce planning is more than bringing on or retaining talent; it also includes the outflow of capital to pay the workforce, the approach to workforce activities, and the long-term planning of workforce growth and decline (Mayo, 2015). Workforce planning comprises operational events including human capital shortages, motivating the workforce, and overall management of a firm's personnel (Douglas-Lenders, Holland, & Allen, 2017; Judit, Adam, Gyul, Peter, & Jozsef, 2017). Bowen and Mills (2017) in their research on workforce motivation and pay attested that

strategies that link increased pay to increased performance had positive impacts on the organization. Another crucial item for small business leaders to strategically plan for is potential workforce shortages, and resolving unplanned shortages takes time (Anderson, 2016; Lin, Lin, & Xiaoming, 2016). In small, family-owned and operated businesses, leaders may need to look beyond the extended family when supporting their operational workforce.

Extended family. Hiring family members into family-owned small businesses has advantages; however, leaders should afford these employees the same earnings, taxes, and services as nonfamily-member employees (IRS, 2018). Stacchini and Degasperri (2015) posited family-run businesses potentially had increased levels of trust among family employees versus their non-family-run counterparts. Furthermore, Stacchini and Degasperri (2015) identified linkages between family commitment to organizational success, governance factors, and operational success. Another possible difference in a family owned and operated small business pertains to leadership and management characteristics. Both the closeness and culture of the family unit affects small business owners' operational results (Efferin & Hartono, 2015). Finally, family members filling employment positions can affect the organizational structure, governance, investment potential, and long-term strategy execution (Baek, Cho, & Fazio, 2016).

Transition

In Section 1, I outlined the foundation of this study including the background of the problem, both problem and purpose statements, and the nature of this study. The current body of literature on strategies business leaders use to engage the next generation

of customer is diverse. Moreover, there is also limited evidence on processes and procedures to engage the next generation of customers to ensure sustainability for longer than 5 years. Additional details covered include the central research question, conceptual framework, operational definitions, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. The researcher's critical review of the relevant and professional literature validates a current need for research in this area.

Section 2 includes a detailed analysis of the role of the researcher, study participants, and the research method and design. I defined the study population and justified the sampling method. I included information on ethical research, data collection instruments and techniques, data analysis, reliability, and validity. Finally, in Section 3, I summarized study findings, business practice applications, and potential opportunities for future research. In this final section, I conducted my client organization research using the Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework (2017-2018). Using the prescribed Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence, I explored leadership; strategy; customers; measurement, analysis, and knowledge management; workforce; operations; and results. I accomplished this exploration via an integrated systems-based research approach.

Section 2: The Project

In Section 2, I have included discussions of the study's purpose, my role as researcher, study participants, research method and design, population and sampling, data collection, research ethics, reliability, and validity. I used semistructured telephone interviews as my primary data collection technique. I collected information from three leaders within a for-profit organization in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States and reviewed company documents to explore customer engagement strategies.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies business leaders use to engage the next generation of customers to ensure sustainability for longer than 5 years. The targeted population for this study consisted of business leaders from a for-profit organization in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States who successfully implemented strategies that engage the next generation of customers to sustain operations for longer than 5 years. Findings from this study may enable for-profit small business owners not only to succeed in their selected ventures, but also to contribute to organizational strategies that support local economic growth, and thus larger scale positive social change.

Role of the Researcher

Hoeber and Shaw (2017) identified qualitative researchers as data collection instruments. Thus, I was the primary data collection instrument for this qualitative, single-case study. Using case studies, researchers can retrieve participant information while performing analytical procedures leading to identification of common themes (Yin,

2018). Researchers should assess benefits while collecting and analyzing data from a variety of sources (Anney, 2014). Henderson (2018) acknowledged the importance of how researchers transcribe interview notes during small project interviews. I had conducted consulting research for organizations before this doctoral study; however, I had no prior experience with my selected organization or the study participants.

Bias is always present, and a pivotal challenge for new or student researchers is to manage bias and look at the material with a critical lens versus a personal lens. Miracle (2016) posited that it is vital for researchers to incorporate an ethical framework, like the Belmont Report protocols, into their work. Aligning with the Belmont Report protocols, I ensured that I conducted my research following ethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. Yin (2018) asserted that cognizance of contrary evidence and a focus on ethical research practices is but one way to confront research bias. Researchers should not preconceive survey or interview material, nor should they assume possible outcomes (Yin, 2018). Downey (2015), while studying bias during qualitative interviews, attested that interviewers needed to think of their specific role in the process. According to Chamberlain (2016), one way potentially to remove personal bias during an interview is to use a set practice, or protocol. I used an interview protocol for all my participant interviews (Appendix A).

Participants

The independent client organizations identified for scholar-consultants in the Walden University DBA consulting capstone program are selected and scrutinized via a specific, detailed Walden process. In addition, company leaders designated for the DBA

consulting capstone are required to meet specified Walden IRB requirements. Van Rijnsoever (2017) identified that the minimal study sample size needs to reach data saturation is challenging to estimate. Researchers can use fewer than five participants, the sample size is study dependent, and selection ultimately should support the selected research design (Emmel, 2015; van Rijnsoever, 2017). Participants for this doctoral study were members occupying leadership roles in a small, family-owned, for-profit business. Two participants are co-owners and business partners, and the third is the company business manager.

During interviews, the researcher and participants require a good rapport with each other, and researchers may ask the participants to review draft study material (Yin, 2018). Over a period of several weeks, I had the opportunity to build a relationship with my participants, and per the Walden consulting capstone requirements, client organization leaders should have an opportunity to review all client organization material. All study participants (a) were over 18 years of age, (b) have served in a leadership position since company formation, (c) were intimately involved in overall business operations, and (d) were in positions that supported answering the doctoral study interview questions. I had all leaders sign the Walden Senior Leaders' Consent Form before proceeding with any of the interviews.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

I used a qualitative method for this study. Researchers employing the qualitative method explore processes or lived experiences by asking questions about a problem

versus examining relationships among research variables (Bailey, 2014). Yin (2018) noted qualitative researchers explore the *what*, *why*, and *how* about processes, lived experiences, or specific phenomenon to facilitate an assessment from the interviewees' perspectives. I studied both processes and lived experiences of my research participants that were relevant to addressing the purpose of my study; therefore, the qualitative methodology was suitable. Gelling (2015) identified that in some studies, qualitative approaches are strategically different from quantitative methods, and the qualitative approach affords researchers the ability to both interview participants and explore their lived experiences.

Quantitative researchers collect and analyze data to compare or contrast differences among variables (Halcomb & Hickman, 2015). Because I did not intend to examine relationships or differences among variables, the quantitative method was not appropriate for this research study. Researchers use the mixed method to combine quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study (Yin, 2018). Researchers mesh qualitative and quantitative attributes in a mixed method study (Saunders et al., 2015). Because I did not use the quantitative method in this study, the mixed method was not appropriate for my research. Baillie (2015), while evaluating ethical research practices, attested that researchers could promote and evaluate research study rigor via qualitative research. Using qualitative research, I engaged with my client organization leaders to explore strategies small business leaders use to engage the next generation of customers to ensure sustainability for longer than 5 years.

Research Design

I used a single-case study design for this study. In qualitative studies, researchers use phenomenology, ethnography, or case study research designs to explore indepth experiences, methods, and procedures (Yin, 2017). Researchers use phenomenological research designs to gather information from participants, specifically on participants' worldviews and lived experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Because I did not describe participants' worldviews or lived experiences, the phenomenological research design was not appropriate for this study. Researchers use ethnography to identify shared patterns of group culture, including cultural beliefs (Marion et al., 2015). Because I did not seek to understand shared patterns of group culture, I did not use the ethnographic design.

Researchers use the case study design to gather participant information in conjunction with analytical inquiry seeking common themes (Yin, 2017). I used the case study design to capture leaders' strategies used to engage the next generation of customers in order to ensure business sustainability for longer than 5 years. Gaya and Smith (2016) advocated using single-case study designs in research because they are both practical and appropriate for understanding complex issues. Moreover, combining a qualitative method with a case study design affords researchers the ability to explore complex issues (Gaya & Smith, 2016). Runfola, Perna, Baraldi, and Gregori (2016), while assessing qualitative research strategies, posited that case studies are effective in garnering insights through interviews. I conducted semistructured interviews to collect study data using the Baldrige 2017-2018 Excellence Framework as my template. A case

study design was an appropriate choice to explore and answer the research question in this doctoral study.

Population and Sampling

I explored strategies that business leaders use to engage the next generation of customers to ensure sustainability for longer than 5 years. Yin (2017) noted that it is essential for researchers to comprehend a suitable population for their research studies. I incorporated a purposeful sample of three participants who are leaders in a for-profit organization that provided data on customer engagement and operational sustainability. Robinson (2014) posited that purposive sampling is widely used in qualitative research, is a critical component in research design, and links information-rich material to the explored phenomenon. By using purposive sampling, I obtained data from a limited resource set while maintaining a critical lens on required research phenomenon of interest (see Robinson, 2014; Yin, 2017).

Researchers using purposive sampling alleviate a portion of the labor-intensive, exhaustive sampling process, and they draw parallels between sample participants and overall research purpose (Charlotte, Karin, & Johan, 2016; Duan, Bhaumik, Palinkas, & Hoagwood, 2015). The participants I selected for this single-case, qualitative study were senior leaders from a for-profit company headquartered in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. The selected participants are qualified for their organizational position and had sufficient experience to provide useful data for answering my central research question.

I facilitated semistructured interviews to gather study data. I conducted interviews via telephone conference call, recorded the sessions, and complied with all Walden University IRB requirements. After concluding the interviews, I transcribed all recordings, developing codes and identifying themes. The initial code development for the small-scale interviews centers on the identification of central themes and then expands into both meaning and essences of participant experience. Saunders et al. (2015) attested that data coding affords researchers the ability link raw data to concepts and patterns. I grouped interview material by similarities, variances, or by other specific research nuances. After reviewing the interview transcripts, I aligned collected data with specific themes and then categorized them within the defined themes. Finally, I looked for recurring themes among the three interview participant transcripts.

Fusch and Ness (2015) identified data saturation as conceptually difficult to define, yet, Tran, Porcher, Ravaud, and Falissard (2016) attested that data saturation is the point where no new themes or information emerge from the study participants. I reached data saturation when collected participant information did not reveal any additional themes or information. Methodological triangulation is the integration of multiple data sources to evaluate research phenomenon (Drouin, Stewart, & Van Gorder, 2015). I used company data from the for-profit organization along with semistructured interview material. Because I incorporated more than one method to gather data in this study, I utilized methodological triangulation. Researchers add credibility to their selected research study design by not only analyzing a variety of collected data, but also

incorporating diversity in collection methods (Hober, Weitlaner, & Pergler, 2016; Yin, 2018).

Ethical Research

Walden University's Research Ethics and Compliance department manages the University's IRB, whose members ensure ethical research compliance at the university, state, and federal level. Walden's IRB facilitates proof of informed consent via a formalized IRB application and vetting process. After receiving Walden IRB approval, I commenced ethical research with my client organization. The Walden IRB approval number for this study is IRB 09-19-17-0666468, which allowed me to collect and analyze data from senior leader interviews, public data and literature, and internal site documents and data (Walden, 2017).

In his study on ethical research, Biros (2018) attested that it is pivotal for researchers to gain informed consent when working with human participants. Although participation in this study was voluntary, I did receive participants' consent to partake in this study via a consent form. At any time, the participants could withdraw from this study by directly informing me via phone, e-mail, or text messaging. In addition, the client organization could withdraw from the consulting capstone by contacting Walden University. I would formally document the withdraw notification and interaction with that study participant, or client organization would cease immediately. Moreover, study withdraw could occur during active research or post data collection. I did not offer incentives, monetary or otherwise, for any portion of this study.

To help safeguard the ethical protection of participants, I used several precautionary procedures. First, I identified participants with a pseudonym, Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, and coded identification, PO1, PO2, PO3 (Appendix A). Second, I redacted all personally identified information, including the name of the client organization. This redaction includes all agreement documents, the DBA research agreement, and the scholar consultant service orders. Finally, I have locked all written study documentation, transcripts, and interview forms in my home safe, where I will store them for no less than 5 years. I also secured all electronic data and communication on an encrypted thumb-drive, again in my house safe, for 5 years to protect rights of participants.

Data Collection Instruments

For qualitative research studies, the researcher serves as a data collection instrument (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Saunders et al., 2015; Yin, 2018). For this research study, I was the primary data collection instrument. Cridland, Jones, Caputi, and Magee, (2015) in their qualitative research study concluded that semistructured interviews are involved, take time to prepare for, and required coded data analysis. Researchers using semistructured interviews should have an interview guide, voluntary consent, and a participant feedback mechanism (Cridland et al., 2015). Semistructured interviews are common in qualitative research, are guided by the interviewee, and provide unique participant understanding and inputs (Kopp, Crump, & Weis, 2017; Pucher, Aggarwal, Singh, Tahir, & Darzi, 2015). I conducted semistructured interviews to collect data from three leaders in my client organization using open-ended questions (Appendix A).

My research questions were all open-ended, and I personally conducted all three interviews. The plan was to allow 60 minutes for each interview, digitally record each interview, take notes during the interview, and follow the interview protocol. I started with the central research question to lay the interview foundation and then proceeded with the remaining questions. Furthermore, after transcribing the interview data, I member checked with each interviewee to verify and validate data correctness. Harvey (2015) identified member checking as a sound approach to validate qualitative research interviews. Member checking also increases participant interview accuracy, consistency, overall study credibility, and data saturation (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016; Santos, Magalhaes, & da Silva, 2017).

Data Collection Technique

My primary approach for collecting research data was via three semistructured interviews. I did not intend to conduct a pilot study, as I was solely using corporate document analysis and semistructured interviews. In addition, my assigned client organization leaders provided me with company documents for review. These documents include financial statements, tax records, marketing and advertising plans, client survey information, and additional corporate papers. Data collection also included recorded interviews with three client organization leaders. Onwuegbuzie and Byers (2014), asserted that interviews were not only common in qualitative research, but also ideal data collection techniques. Interviews are practical, are ideal for researchers to engage with their study participants and are a sound data collection instrument (Cairney & St Denny, 2015; Honan, 2014). Alternatively, Lamont and Swidler (2014) posited that there were

weaknesses with interviewing, especially if researchers did not comprehend interview challenges. Weaknesses, or disadvantages, include poorly developed questions, researcher bias during the interview, and inadequate documentation (Lamont & Swidler, 2014).

Regarding my interview protocol, each interviewee signed a consent form before participating in the interview, including an understanding of being recorded while on the call. I sent e-mails to my client organization leaders requesting interview availability, scheduled a date, and sent e-mail reminders. I conducted the interviews using a recorded speakerphone, took detailed notes, and followed the interview protocol with each interviewee (Appendix A). After each interview, I member checked my documented data by sharing the essence of the interviews with the research participants so that they could affirm, augment, correct my notes. Member checking validates both interview accuracy and consistency since it is essential to authenticate qualitative research (Santos et al., 2017).

Data Organization Techniques

To track data collected during my study, I used a reflective journal. Reflective journals aid researchers with information reliability, knowledge transfer, evaluating relevant research themes, and increased quality and validity in research analysis (Lazarus, Satyapal, & Sookrajh, 2017; Mahlanze, & Sibiya, 2017; Vicary, Young, & Hicks, 2017). In addition, I cataloged interview data via a coding system. I also compared both digital recordings and transcribed data to verify and validate data collection completeness.

In accordance with Walden University IRB requirements, I will store all saved, written correspondence in my home safe for 5 years. Furthermore, all digital communication and documentation will be on an encrypted thumb drive, which will also be in a locked safe and stored for 5 years. After 5 years, I will crosscut shred all paper documentation and digitally wipe all electronic data from the thumb-drive.

Data Analysis

I used methodological triangulation as my primary data analysis process for this qualitative case study. Methodological triangulation is an examination method where researchers triangulate research results by using more than one data gathering procedure (Kotus & Rzeszewski, 2015). Methodological triangulation is not only a researcher's approach to understanding collected data, but also a way to cross verify information from more than one source (Hober et al., 2016; Joslin & Muller, 2016). In addition, I incorporated all my data collection into my analysis. This gathering includes information from the interviews and written and verbal information collected throughout this study.

After collecting and analyzing data, I identified themes and grouped them into specific research categories. The collection and analysis was a manual process, and validation of interview data occurred via member checking procedures. A preponderance of data for this study aligns with the 2017-2018 Baldrige Excellence Framework that Walden scholar consultants use to evaluate their client organizations. Finally, after identifying themes, I correlated this information to current literature and von Bertalanffy's (1972) general systems theory, seeking parallels to interrelationship principles of the external environment and the client organization as a whole. I expected

to uncover and explore strategies that business leaders use to engage the next generation of customers ensuring sustainability for longer than 5 years.

Reliability and Validity

Although not directly measurable, qualitative researchers should establish assessment techniques similar to the quantitative concepts of reliability and validity for dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability. Two possible measurement techniques include member-checking and triangulation (Harvey, 2015; Yin, 2018). Researchers should also analyze reliability and validity within the context of qualitative research data analysis. A central element in research is to assess both reliability and validity critically (Saunders et al., 2015). Moreover, within a qualitative study, comparable measures of reliability and validity are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Saunders et al., 2015). Researcher skills, data collection techniques, inquiry analysis, and bias affect both validity and reliability. Reliability is linked to replication and consistency, whereas validity ties in transferability, credibility, and applicability (Saunders et al., 2015; Yin, 2018).

Reliability

The importance of reliability within the doctoral study is to ensure data stability, accurate data collection, data interpretation, and participant sampling. Attaining a portion of study reliability is when researchers garner the same results under the same research conditions (Yin, 2014). Leung (2015) in his studies on qualitative research asserted reliability was essential to the research process, was challenging to achieve, and was pivotal to attain quality in a research study. Researchers also attain rigor in scholarly

inquiry via attaining reliability in qualitative research (Cypress, 2017; Dikko, 2016). Moreover, Dikko (2016) attested reliability is a method for researchers to refine their overall study. Furthermore, reliability across research inquire produces both stable and consistent results and affords researchers reliable study results (Darawsheh, 2014; Savage & McIntosh, 2016). To ensure both consistency and dependability in my doctoral study, I shared collected findings with my interview participants confirming both applicability and accuracy of the received information. Furthermore, by tape-recording, taking notes, and careful documentation, I decreased overall procedural errors and increased study reliability.

Validity

The significance of validity within the same study provides finding accuracy, to include precise and objective data collection. Saunders et al. (2015) posited that researchers ensure validity via using multiple sources of evidence, confirming accurate data analysis, and attaining data saturation. Concerning data saturation, Fusch and Ness (2015) in their research on data saturation within qualitative studies concluded failing to reach data saturation negatively affects overall research quality. Furthermore, triangulation is a way to confirm both data credibility and validity (Saunders et al., 2015). Researchers that incorporate triangulation comprehend differences among case study participants, which aids in establishing both consistency rigor within a research study (Turner, Cardinal, & Burton, 2017). An overall indication of sound research, to include method and design, refers to study validity (Leung, 2015). To ensure credibility and

applicability in this study, I minimized bias and collected information until reaching data saturation.

Transition and Summary

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore strategies business leaders use to engage the next generation of customers to ensure sustainability for longer than 5 years. In Section 2, I outlined the overall proposal for my doctoral study, and restated the study purpose, described the role of the researcher, and identified the participant pool. I also covered the research method, design, population, sampling, ethical research, study reliability, and validity. Furthermore, I provided information on data collection instruments and techniques, data organization, and data analysis. In Section 3, I use the Baldrige Framework to cover specific details from my client organization. These details start with the GSX organizational profile. I conclude Section 3 with overall findings, my executive summary, overall project summary, and recommendations for future research.

Section 3: Organizational Profile

GSX Company is a for-profit family-owned and operated, small business that specializes in a niche hobby located in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. In the 1980s, there were five founding partners; the business focused on a collectable product line, and when founded it was the premiere showcaser of vintage and antique collectables and related items. As an annual Show, GSX originally premiered in 1980 and was a spinoff of a mid-1970s business, which initially started as a hobby newsletter. In 2016, prior owners sold GSX to the current owners who incorporated the business and transitioned it into a for-profit registered S corporation.

GSX is the longest running show of its kind, has had loyal customers attend annually for 30 years, and is globally known. Although owning the existing business for only 2 years, the current directors were also involved with the preceding business. Both owners pride themselves on honoring the culture of the annual Show, embrace the loyalty of long-term Show attendees, and plan to transform and sustain the current business into the future. These transformation and sustainment initiatives challenge GSX leaders on strategic engagement for the next generation of customers to ensure sustainability for longer than 5 years.

Key Factors Worksheet

Organizational Description

GSX is a for-profit S corporation registered in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. The primary purpose of GSX is to hold an annual show or event to display, sell, purchase, trade, exhibit, advertise, and learn about their collectable product line and

related items or collectibles. In 2018, the organization had two equal partners as leaders and was a small, family-owned business.

Organizational environment. GSX is a family-owned and operated, for-profit, small business that specializes in a niche hobby that culminates in an annual Show.

Product offerings. The primary product offering for GSX is the annual Show, which provides vendors and hobbyists the opportunity to sell and display items at a table during the Show, along with room trading within the hotel rooms. There are additional product offerings via a self-owned retail subsidiary. GSX sells these additional retail products before, during, and after the annual Show. The primary driver enabling continued GSX operational success is the annual Show. Although there is trickle income derived from a retail subsidiary, the primary purpose of this linkage is for show branding and promotion. The primary product for GSX is the annual Show delivered via a hotel venue supported by online and print advertising.

Mission, vision, and values. GSX's core competency of the depth of knowledge and experience in the hobby of the senior leader, the leader's network and reputation, and leveraging the long history of the Show, is supported by and nested in the organization's mission, vision, and values. GSX organizational leaders' ensures the company's mission aligns with the company's guiding principles. The GSX vision is forward looking and reflects trends and innovations of current and related hobbies. GSX leaders strive to conduct most of their business locally, supporting the economy of the region in which GSX is incorporated. The five GSX core values are mutually reinforcing, and one does not outweigh another in importance (Table 2).

Table 2

GSX Mission vision, and values (MVV)

Core competency	Mission	Vision	Values: Guiding principles
The fundamental competency of GSX is the depth of knowledge and experience in the hobby of the senior leader, the leader's network and reputation, and leveraging the long history of the Show.	The mission of GSX is to honor the culture of the GSX Show and grow the collecting hobby.	The GSX company reflects the trends and innovations of the collecting hobby, integrates related hobbies, and honors the traditions of the hobby.	1 - Honor the founders of the GSX Company and their vision. 2 - Operate with honesty, integrity, and transparency. 3 - Support local suppliers and partners. 4 - Engage family in the business. 5 - Provide our collectable-vendors with community, camaraderie, and enjoyment.

Workforce profile. GSX's workforce comprises two business partners, three staff members, and volunteers (Figure 1). Leaders compensates all involved with the annual GSX Show either with a stipend or compensation in kind. One example of compensation in kind is work in exchange for room night(s) at the Show hotel venue. Commitment from volunteers supports GSX leaders' mission, vision, and values. Although senior leaders at GSX possess advanced degrees, there are no specific educational requirements for the employee groups within the company. Show growth from 2016 to 2018 led to an increased demand for supporting volunteers. GSX leaders acknowledged this demand signal but maintained their current workforce composition to support sub-linear personnel growth. Finally, there are no organized bargaining units or unique health and safety

requirements at GSX.

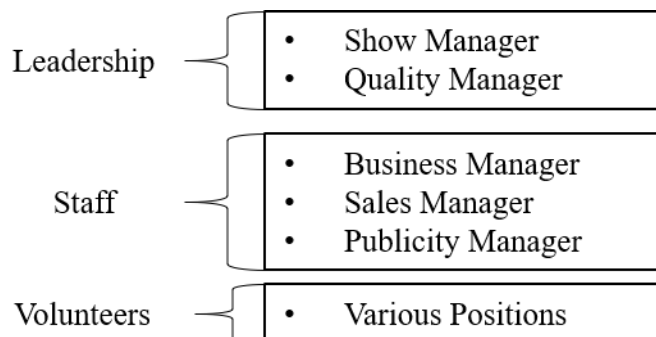


Figure 1. GSX workforce profile.

Assets. GSX manages all operations out of a home office. Company leaders hold the annual Show at a commercial hotel venue. GSX leaders rent a storage facility. Assets include computers, printers, software applications, and reusable equipment for publicity and promotion. Leaders own the data, databases, and spreadsheets purchased from the previous owners. GSX assets total \$75,000.

Regulatory requirements. GSX is a for-profit S corporation registered in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. As an S corporation operating out of this region of the United States, GSX leaders must abide by regulatory requirements in their home state and the additional states they operate from. GSX's leaders, staff members, and volunteers observe all Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rules, regulations, tax codes, and compliance with the state Department of Revenue (DOR). In compliance with the annual contract with the Show venue, GSX leaders maintain a \$1M liability policy with annual coverage including the Show date. GSX leaders do not have any applicable occupational health and safety regulations, accreditation or certification requirements, industry standards, and

environmental or product regulations. See Table 3 for a complete list of GSX regulatory requirements.

Table 3

GSX Regulatory Requirements

Requirement	State area
Formal S corporation documents	mid-Atlantic region
Annual S corporation registration	mid-Atlantic region
S corporation taxes	mid-Atlantic region
Retail subsidiary sales taxes	mid-Atlantic region
Annual report to lender	mid-Atlantic region
Annual show event permit	mid-West region
Annual show surcharge (head tax)	mid-West region
Vendor sales tax information	mid-West region
Event information/totals	mid-West region
Required insurance liability policy	mid-West region
Annual show vendor tax coupon	mid-West region
Additional show tax coupon	Southern region
Additional show tax coupon	mid-Atlantic region

Organizational relationships. In the following subsections, I provide an analysis of the GSX governance structure, senior leaders, customers, stakeholders, market segments, suppliers, partners, and collaborators.

Organizational structure. GSX is a consumer product and a services provider organization that operates as a for-profit S corporation. GSX has a board of directors that provides governance or strategic oversight; however, the co-owners carry out all day-to-day operational activities. GSX does not have a parent organization, and all critical decision-making does not solely fall on the two business partners. All five company leaders are responsible for managing the organization's decision-making process. The systematic decision-making process always includes input from the key stakeholders.

Customers and stakeholders. GSX leaders have key customers (vendors and

public) and key stakeholders (suppliers, partners, and workforce) on a national and international scale. Table 4 shows all GSX key customer and stakeholder requirements.

Table 4

GSX Key Customers' and Stakeholders' Requirements

Key customers	Key requirements and expectations
Annual show vendors	Ease of operation, promotion, GSX communication, new audience
Public 1 - those collecting vintage and antique collectables	Access to vendors selling those items
Public 2 - those collecting currently made detailed model collectables	Access to vendors selling those items
Public 3 - those collecting newly made collectables reminiscent of historic collectables	Access to vendors selling those items
Public 4 - those with no particular collecting interest or new to the hobby	An interesting, convenient, educational, and family-friendly venue
Key stakeholders	Key requirements and expectations
Suppliers and collaborators	A friendly, open, and trusting collaborative relationship
Partners	Transparency. Fulfillment of contractual agreements and mutually beneficial financial returns.
Workforce	A friendly, open, and trusting collaborative relationship

Suppliers and partners. GSX remains operationally viable because of its key suppliers, partners, and collaborators, who all serve a role in serving the company's internal and external customers (Table 5). GSX leaders frequently communicate with

their suppliers, often seeking out industry best practices, creative input, and annual Show considerations. Whereas interactions with collaborators are more formalized and structured, partner communication is continuous throughout the year including dedicated pre- and post-Show conference support. Although partner support is daily during the week of the annual Show, company leaders and staff members support vendors, collectors, and stakeholders throughout the year. GSX leaders value collaboration and creative thinking and empower those with whom they work in areas of product and competitive advantage. GSX enhances competitiveness by identifying what each contributor brings, product or service, to the annual Show. The business leader's primary communication mechanism for suppliers, partners, and collaborators is to maintain an ongoing dialogue with vendors and to sustain this dialogue in communication channels appropriate to the annual Show event, including meetings, electronic communication, and telephone calls.

Table 5

GSX Key Suppliers, Partners, and Collaborators

Suppliers, partners, and collaborators	Influence on organizational systems	Influence on innovation and competitiveness
Suppliers		
Local printing	Print advertising, stationary, and supplies	
Local printing	Large-scale banners	
Local supplier	Purchasable products	Innovative industry trends, policy, and regulatory requirements
Insurance company	Regulatory liability policy	
Advertising media	Print and online advertising	
Law firm	State attorneys	
Law firm	State attorneys	
Local accountant	Accountant services	
Partners		
Hyatt regency	Host hotel	Augment show success
Collaborators		
Local bank	Asset purchase	
Local convention bureau	Event permit and head tax	Annual event support
Village at show location	Event advertisement	

Organizational Situation

In the following subsections, I provide an analysis of GSX's strategic situation including the overall competitive environment, strategic context, and leaders' procedures for evaluating and improving key GSX projects and processes.

Competitive environment. In this section, I provide an exploration of the GSX competitive position, competitive situation, sources of comparative and competitive data, strategic challenges and advantages, and performance improvement system.

Competitive position. GSX is the largest and longest-running collectibles Show of its kind. There are other Shows similar to GSX; however, leaders of these other Shows rate themselves the second biggest and second largest Show in the United States. The designation of *second* alludes to GSX being the largest. Similar venues are national (Texas, East Coast, and West Coast) and international (Germany, France, and the United Kingdom).

Competitiveness changes. GSX business leaders have been successful in comparison to their competition, but the current owners are potentially losing some market space due to the aging out of loyal Show attendees. Although on average, 6-10 new attendees support the annual Show, approximately the same number attrite yearly. There are potential openings to expand in additional market space including emerging highly detailed models, accessories, and comprehensive miniature memorabilia in additional markets.

Comparative data. The challenge for GSX regarding comparative data is the lack of, or readily accessible, published current operational market space information. The size of the GSX organization and the niche market space they operate within exacerbates these challenges. One source of comparative data for GSX is historical Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award recipients such as PricewaterhouseCoopers and K&N Management. Although staffing differs between PricewaterhouseCoopers and GSX, GSX leaders accomplish their strategic planning process comparable to PricewaterhouseCoopers. For example, GSX leaders assess their markets, clients, and competition via the observe, orient, decide, act (OODA) process such as

PricewaterhouseCoopers' process. The OODA process at GSX affords leaders to be agile with decision-making while assessing and responding to client concerns. Additional comparative data areas GSX leaders review include targeted performance projections and contractual obligations with the annual venue hotel, show data collected from similar venues globally, and dialogue with leaders from these same shows.

Strategic context. Critical strategic challenges for GSX include an aging client base and a lack of new entrants into miniature collecting. GSX incorporates press releases for the annual Show, is well known globally, is well covered (photo and print), and continuously innovates within their product market. GSX leaders are researching technological solutions to stimulate growth in their market niche. Operational growth challenges revolve around retention, generational expansion, and long-term innovation. Leaders at GSX leverage their strategic advantages to mitigate strategic challenges to the maximum extent possible (see Figure 2).

Strategic Advantages	Strategic Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Globally known - Longest running show of its kind - Loyal customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aging client base - Lack of new entrants - Generational expansion

Figure 2. GSX key strategic advantages and challenges.

Performance improvement system. GSX leaders use plan-do-study-act (PDSA) as a performance improvement system. In addition, business leaders and staff members accomplish just-in-time enhancements when required. GSX does not have a formalized

employee-focused performance appraisal, or improvement, system. However, GSX does accomplish performance improvement for all key organizational process on an annual basis. Process improvement includes online innovation, branding, loyalty programs, participant activities, and procedural improvements. GSX uses historical data if available, or leaders incorporate anecdotal feedback for evaluation purposes. Finally, the two co-partners collaborate on process improvement and accomplish continuous innovative processes.

Leadership Triad: Leadership, Strategy, and Customers

Leadership

In the following subsections, I provide an exploration of how GSX leaders lead their organization including the setting of vision and values, engaging their workforce and customers, how they create an environment for success and focus on action.

Senior leadership. The senior leadership at GSX includes two co-owners, a show manager, a business manager, and a publicity manager. These five leaders carry out all day-to-day duties, provide operational guidance, and sustain the organization. All five members work as a close-knit unit in this family-owned and operated, small business to achieve company goals and support the GSX mission, vision, and values (MVV).

Vision and Values. The GSX co-owners had prior exposure to the previous owners, their firm, and operational procedures. The GSX owners readily admit that they already possessed a collective sense of each other's values and priorities. A portion of this stems from working with the previous owner's firm, and the other from detailed analysis accomplished before purchasing the company. After purchasing the company,

the co-owners spent time during their initial meetings collaborating on how they would not only present themselves, but also how interactions would work with the vendors, public, peers, and family members. These initial conversations encompassed employment practices and their application of the vision and values they intended to bring to the business that they had just purchased. Both owners were resolute in upholding the mission, vision, and values they penned (Table 2).

As a small five-person family-owned organization, the co-owners already knew the remaining three business leaders shared the same vision and values attributes. However, senior leaders elected to codify and deploy these ideas to their key suppliers, partners, customers, and collaborators (Table 5) by identifying them on their website. Alternatively, the leaders' vision and values are iterated and reiterated in formal and informal conversations with all the stakeholders identified above. All five company leaders affirm that they carry out their day-to-day actions based on their values and they link actions and company decisions to these same principles.

GSX leaders do not hold pep talks or schedule specific meetings dedicated to stressing company vision and values because all company members already promote ethical and legal behavior. It is an essential requirement for those dealing with GSX to exhibit ethical and legal behavior, and leadership asserts this conduct is non-negotiable. The co-owners relayed that their steadfast commitment to ethical actions is beyond reproach, especially in a company that spends an entire year focusing on a single annual event that is over in 1 day. During this 1-day event, neither the owners nor the organizational leaders tolerate unethical or illegal activities. If necessary, and where

appropriate, all five company leaders will make immediate, direct corrections as to what they do (actions) and what they say (values). Senior leaders promote a corporate environment that requires adherence to their values by requiring legal and ethical behavior from the stakeholders they work with. There have been borderline items that cross GSX leadership's ethical vision, regarding product displays, and leaders immediately found a fair and equitable solution for the matter. Leaders conduct all business activities according to the company's stated vision and values, and all independent stakeholder interactions must support the GSX leaders' vision and company values.

Communication. As a small family-owned business, most senior leader business communication to the GSX workforce is informal and occurs on an as required basis. However, due to on-going requirements, the two co-owners carry out persistent communication with the organization's business manager. Alternatively, the remaining company members do have periodic formal communication exchanges via scheduled in-person meetings. Informal communication primarily occurs through e-mail or phone call exchanges. As with most business, the scope and depth of on-going work processes determine the communication mode. Additional modes of communication include the GSX website, social media, letters, and advertising handouts (see Table 6).

Leaders' communication with key customers is via informal e-mail and phone conversations; however, there are several opportunities annually for them to communicate formally in written form. This focus-specific communication with key customers tends to support annual Show requirements. A tertiary communication conduit

is when GSX leaders see key customers at competitor venues or product-related events. All five GSX leaders comprehend the importance of direct stakeholder communication and resources are in place to support flexible, adaptable two-way dialogues. Leaders at GSX encourages inputs and opinions from their stakeholders, they elicit two-way communication, they value feedback, and ensure they acknowledge all inputs with appreciation. As company leaders communicate crucial decisions and organizational requirements, they openly explain these items and solicit inputs from all parties. The GSX senior leaders are directly involved in workforce motivation, incorporating high-performance actions, and formally recognizing vendors and co-workers. Throughout 2018, leaders implemented a GSX loyalty program that incorporated 10-, 20-, and 30-year attendance badges to honor vendor loyalty (Figure 13).

Table 6

GSX Workforce and Stakeholder Communication Methods

	Meetings	E-Mails	Social Media	Website
Partners	O	O	M	M
Volunteers	AR	O	AR	A
Suppliers	O	O	AR	A
Vendors	O	O	AR	A
Community	AR	AR	AR	AR
Other	X	X	X	X
Other	X	X	X	X

Note. M = Monthly, A = Annually, O = Ongoing, AR = As Required

Mission and Organizational Performance. Senior leaders at GSX foster an environment for success by having a willingness to research vendors expectations and requirements, and pilot innovative improvements based on collected data and information. Leaders foster an achievement-oriented environment by being open to this

research-based change and innovation. Leaders identified reading, asking, and listening as catalysts for innovative achievement and agile changes at GSX. As a means to cultivate organizational learning, GSX leaders stay immersed in day-to-day business activities and related hobbies, subscribe to every publication in the hobby, and attend as many competitors' Shows as possible. Senior GSX leaders also publish and present on the hobby whenever possible. By recognizing their workforce after positive customer engagement activities, encouraging and soliciting opinions and suggestions, GSX leaders create an optimum workforce culture focused on customer engagement.

Although the GSX show manager has been with the current incorporated business for 2 years, this same leader interacted over 4 decades with the previous enterprise. Leaders at GSX understand that they are a young organization, only on their second year of owned operations; however, they also acknowledge the importance of succession planning and are in the initial stages of succession discussions between the co-owners. All five leaders at GSX create a focus on activities that will achieve the organization's mission by engaged in honoring the past and traditions of the annual Show. Leaders endeavor to identify needed actions, be sensitive to new interests and innovations, and incorporate these items appropriately into current and future Show events. Regarding organizational performance expectations and their focus on creating and balancing value for customers and other stakeholders, GSX leaders use creativity in the balance and focus on these activities. All five GSX leaders not only engaged their current workforce to assist in carrying out these organizational performance goals, but also hold themselves personally accountable for all organizational actions.

Governance and societal responsibilities. In the following subsections, I provide an analysis of the GSX governance system, senior leader accountability and performance evaluation, legal and regulatory compliance, ethical behavior, benefits of societal well-being, and overall community support.

Governance system. GSX leaders are accountable to stakeholders and make business decisions based on evidence and input from stakeholders. In addition, all GSX leaders are accountable for upholding organizational values. Regarding strategic plans, accountability for strategic planning happens at the leadership level, and GSX leaders (show manager, quality manager, business manager, sales manager, and the marketing manager) align their actions with strategic plans, goals, and objectives, to the corporate organizational values. For items of fiscal accountability, GSX leaders consult with the organization's corporate accountant and the senior vice president from their local bank to ensure the company leaders are fiscally accountable in all business practices and transactions.

GSX leaders use systematic communications processes to explain actions, anticipate stakeholders' concerns, and remain transparent in all day-to-day operations. A prime example of this was when GSX co-owners recently addressed an issue related to communications from a state Department of Revenue (DR) requesting post-annual-Show for the names and contact information of participating vendors. Because GSX leaders had not informed their vendors that they would be sharing any of their contact information with the state DR, the owners sought legal advice. The owners contacted a former accountant from the predecessor organization, who was familiar with the organization's

corporate history and state tax law. All parties determined that the state tax statutes clearly identify that the state can request event managers provide any available information.

Because GSX leaders did not have the opportunity to inform vendors before the fact, the two owners sought legal counsel for state tax law advice. After GSX leaders received the applicable tax information from their legal counsel, they immediately shared the vendors' contact information with the state DR and personally contacted each vendor to let them know of their actions in this matter. GSX leaders deemed the situation important enough to physically attach a legal counsel memorandum, as supporting evidence for the action, to all vendor communication. All leaders asserted that these actions align with the GSX values of honesty, transparency, and integrity.

Per the GSX Articles of Incorporation, there is not a requirement to select governance board members or provide disclosure policies. However, the co-owners do accomplish an independent internal and external financial audit. Although there is no third-party financial audit accomplished, annually, GSX leaders meet with the organization's corporate accountant to review all company finances. GSX leaders also report financial data to their local bank and the Senior Vice President of Commercial Loans. GSX leaders do protect stakeholder interests via two-way communications, fiscal transparency, and by fulfilling the organization's mission of honoring the GSX culture and growing the hobby. As of 2018, there is not a systematic process for succession planning for senior leaders at GSX, but company leaders have begun to discuss

succession with the next generation of family members. These discussions are ongoing, informal, and preliminary.

Performance evaluation. GSX leaders self-evaluate concerning strategic objectives and the organization's mission, vision, and values. Company leaders receive formal and informal inputs from vendors and other stakeholders, including a satisfaction survey and frequent conversations and communications with individual vendors. In most cases, GSX leaders do not wait for stakeholders' reactions and responses but anticipate stakeholders' needs, expectations, and requirements by seeking and asking for advice and inputs. Organizational leaders also monitor social and print media to assess stakeholders' reactions and inputs to GSX activities as well as their overall engagement in the hobby. Regarding performance evaluation usage to advance their development and improve their effectiveness, GSX leaders are all on a personal and professional improvement journey. Accountable to each other and their stakeholders, GSX leaders self-monitor and self-evaluate continuously.

Legal and Ethical Behavior. In the following subsections, I provide an in-depth analysis of how GSX leaders address legal, regulatory, and community concerns and how they promote ethical behavior in all company interactions.

Legal and regulatory compliance. GSX leaders address and anticipate legal, regulatory, and community concerns with their products and operations by basing decisions and actions on the organization's values. All five leaders operate with honesty, integrity, and transparency. Company leadership also monitors social and print media; engages with Show attendees and vendors in ongoing, frank, two-way communications

using multiple media venues; and observes and anticipates stakeholders' actions and reactions to their products and services. GSX leaders prepare for these impacts and concerns proactively, including through conservation of natural resources and effective supply-chain management processes. GSX products and vendors are primarily local suppliers who observe conservation and environmental sustainability via various approaches to recycling and responsible use of natural resources.

As a for-profit S-Corporation, GSX leaders follow regulatory requirements in the areas they operate from. Key compliance processes, measures, and goals are in place to meet and surpass all regulatory and legal requirements. GSX leaders, staff, vendors, suppliers, and volunteers comply with the regulatory requirements from the agencies and organizations identified in Table 3. Concerning key processes, measures, and goals for addressing the risks associated with products and operations, GSX leaders continuously monitor pivotal indicators of the viability of the business. At a minimum, these items include numbers of contracts received and the number of room reservations booked. A constant risk is GSX leaders' ability to address the obligation to the annual contracted hotel to meet the minimum number of room nights, ensuring there is not a charge for the ballroom or facility use during the annual event. In addition, GSX leaders attend hobby-related events around the globe to observe and assess hobby participation levels, cultivate personal and professional relationships with vendors, and evaluate risks associated with company products and services. GSX leaders' goals for addressing these risks are to remain solvent and sustainable and to fulfill the mission of growing the hobby.

Ethical behavior. GSX leaders recognize that their business is a small organization. Leaders self-monitor and monitor one another's actions to ensure alignment with the company's mission, vision, and values. Each company leader bases their evaluation of ethical behavior on a wealth of professional experience. It is a common practice for the top three leaders to point out to one another that a proposed action may not be equitable to all stakeholders or aligned with company values. Many times, these inputs result in refining proposed actions. GSX leaders' ethical behavior processes are part of the organizational culture, which they base on their values of honesty, integrity, and transparency in all behaviors and actions. If there were a breach of ethical behavior, company leaders immediately address and correct behaviors as appropriate and in relation to the observed breach. Finally, GSX leaders reserve the right to design and implement policies to ensure legal and ethical behavior concerning all aspects of their annual event, including denying admission to the event in response to inappropriate behavior. Leaders will also deny vendor contracts in response to any unethical business practice or product.

Societal Responsibilities. In the following subsections, I provide an analysis of how GSX leaders contribute to societal well-being, support and strengthen their communities, and how they contribute to community improvement.

Societal Well-being. GSX leaders are mindful that participating in their hobby promotes an understanding of the history and educational value. To that end, company leaders seek to engage families, children, veterans, and members of hobbies allied with their niche collecting. Leadership considers this engagement a portion of day-to-day

operations, societal well-being, and organizational strategic engagement. GSX leaders contribute to the well-being of their environmental, social, and economic systems by being environmentally aware and responsible for actions on recycling paper, printer products, and disposable materials. GSX partners and suppliers practice a variety of approaches that promote environmental sustainability, such as recycling paper, printer products, and disposable materials.

Community support. GSX leaders are active in their hobby, hobby publications, and related activities. For example, in February 2018, the GSX show manager participated in a museum forum in Kentucky. GSX leaders also support local businesses by working with convention centers and chamber operations. Company leaders support charities near their annual event, use resident suppliers, and participate in local charities on the East Coast. Key communities include niche hobby, allied interest groups, and annual venue state and suburbs interactions. GSX leaders use their professional experience and length of engagement in their hobby to identify and support key communities that have the potential to grow the hobby by creating reciprocal relationships. Company leaders continuously seek out opportunities to link GSX efforts with annual venues in local and home state communities. Several business leaders continuously search for opportunities to link with key communities by identifying the relevance of GSX activities in connection with the activities of other outside organizations. As an example, GSX leaders value history education; therefore, company leaders support their local historic district.

Strategy

In the following subsections, I provide an analysis of how GSX leaders develop their strategic objectives and action plans including implementation and progress measurement.

Strategy development. In this section, I provide an analysis on how GSX leaders develop their company strategy including their planning process, innovation, strategic considerations, and core competencies.

Strategic planning. GSX leaders develop their strategic planning based on evidence of past performance gathered from vendors, suppliers, show attendees, show staff, and former partners. The GSX six-step strategic planning process steps (Figure 3) are cyclical and include:

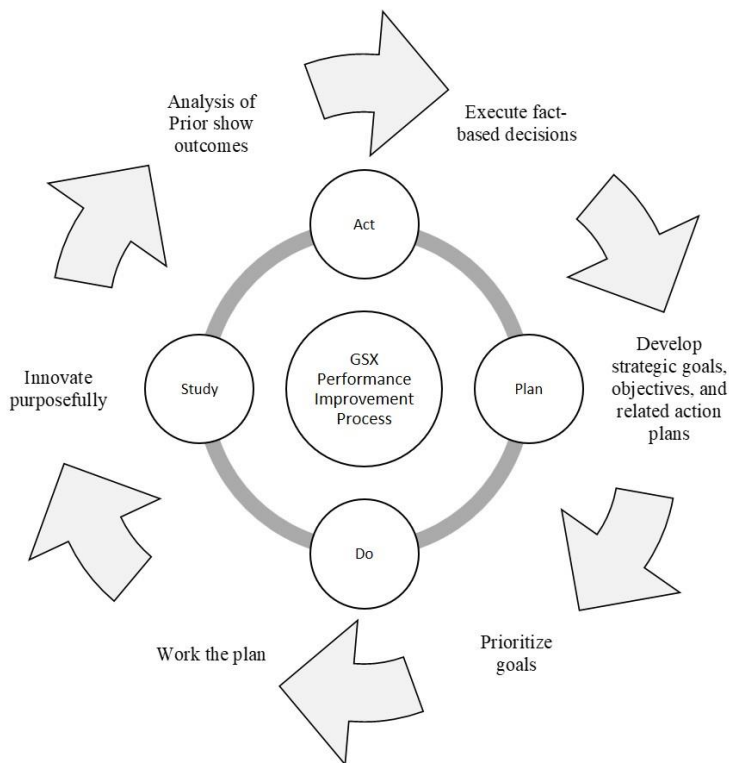


Figure 3. GSX strategic planning process with performance improvement overlay.

1. Analysis of Show outcomes from prior years, including the number of room nights sold; vendors; tables sold; Sunday show attendees (segmented by age, location, new attendee, and returning attendee); total revenue; total expense; net revenue; net as percent of revenue; balance of bank loan; response to advertising; quantity and quality of media coverage; feedback from advertisers and hobby magazine editors; survey responses; and social media posts (including Facebook *likes* and total posts).

2. After analyzing data collected in step one and based on evidence of past performance and assessment of current context, leaders decide on what is important to accomplish. All leaders make fact-based decisions about what to keep doing, what to stop doing, what activities to increase, what activities to decrease, and actionable feedback to the annual venue hotel.

3. Next, GSX leaders develop strategic goals, objectives, and related action plans for the upcoming show (short-term planning) and eventual transition to new leadership (long-term planning).

4. Leadership then prioritizes goals and creates a timetable for accomplishing objectives, including identifying key measures that include at a minimum the baseline budget and expected outcome for each action plan associated with an objective. GSX leaders align work systems and job responsibilities with prioritized goals.

5. The fifth step in the process is for all organizational leaders to work on the proposed plan.

6. The final step in the GSX strategic planning process is for all leaders to innovate purposefully.

Key participants in the strategic planning process include all five business leaders, additional internal stakeholders, and external stakeholders. Short-term planning horizons for GSX leaders are items within 1 year, whereas long-term items are ones that span 3-5 years out. Show planning tends to be annual and focused on strategic goals and objectives for the upcoming show; longer-term planning (for example succession planning and financial forecasting) tends to be of a longer duration (the next 3 to 5 years). The need for transformational change is informed and driven by performance outcomes. For example, leaders identified and acted upon the need to develop family- and child-friendly activities during the Sunday Show. This action was a result of analyzing show demographics and noting a decline in the number of children attending the show with parents. In response, GSX leaders implemented a treasure hunt representing historical figures and characters, a selfie booth, costumed reenactors wandering through the show, prizes, and giveaways for children to encourage their collecting interests and habits. Company leaders address organizational agility and flexibility by responding immediately to stakeholders' feedback received via e-mail, social media, phone, and text. In response to such feedback, GSX leaders design, refine, and implement processes in response to stakeholders' needs, expectations, and suggestions. Because GSX is a small, family-owned organization, leaders can be agile and flexible in making fact-based decisions. GSX performance improvement follows the PDSA process (Figure 3).

Innovation. GSX leaders recognize that failure to innovate could adversely impact sustainability and lead to the decline of the Show and hobby. As owners of the longest-running, premier, international Show of its kind, GSX owners understand and

respond to the responsibility and pressure of sustaining the Show and the hobby. In these early years of Show ownership and transition from former partners and owners, company leaders know that continuous improvement and taking intelligent risks are pivotal to fulfilling the organization's mission of maintaining and growing the hobby.

The GSX strategy development process stimulates and incorporates innovation by using evidence as the basis for making decisions about what risks and investments to pursue and what risks and investments to set aside or delay. GSX leaders identify strategic opportunities by listening to the voices of key stakeholders, monitoring hobby publications, attending and supporting collectibles shows around the country and world to observe and learn, and by studying best practices of small businesses including role-model practices of previous Baldrige Award recipients. Concerning intelligent risks, GSX leaders determine which strategic opportunities to pursue based on opportunity costs and projected return on investment. One prime example is the increasing investment advertising, including online advertising and print advertising in international hobby publications. GSX leaders approved an increased investment in show branding and communications, including social media. Other examples included banners, Facebook outreach, loyalty badges, holiday cards, and website advertising. GSX strategic opportunities included increasing the numbers of first-time Show attendees; increasing sponsorships and partnerships; increasing the number of first-time vendors; and increasing outreach to affiliated hobbies such as militaria, reenactors, history buffs, Legos, and train collectors.

Strategy considerations. GSX leaders use annual survey data, Show collected spot data, and exchanges between and among vendors, Show participants, suppliers, and sponsors, to analyze relevant data and develop information for their strategic planning process. Intelligent risk mitigation occurs through GSX leaders weighing traditional values versus innovative product offerings and services. Strategic objectives link outreach opportunities to expansion prospects, especially if these areas add value to the Show and the customers. GSX leaders use evidence of historical performance to identify strategic opportunities and priorities. A 2018 example occurred when compliance with changes in the regulatory environment (e.g., state department of revenue requirements) drove refinements to GSX processes and procedures. State DR items directed GSX leaders toward increased attention to collecting sales tax and information about vendors (see Governance System details, pp. 69-70).

GSX leaders directly address potential blind spots via continuous research into leading-edge issues, concerns, and practices in their niche hobby as described in conversations with vendors and within hobby publications. GSX leaders visit and participate in national and international collectibles shows; serve as presenters at history museums, associations, and clubs; and study best practices of role-model organizations. Examples of these role-model organizations include previous Baldrige Award recipients; Harvard Business Review articles and case studies; business journals, publications, and associations; and the American Society for Quality meetings and publications. Finally, GSX leaders align all strategic goals and objectives with the organization's MVV (Table

2). If a strategic initiative does not align with the vision or values, GSX leaders do not pursue that initiative.

Work systems and core competencies. GSX leaders determine which processes to accomplish within the organization by assessing leaders' skills, availability, and time available to execute the task. A 2017-2018 example was how the show manager used a background in art to conceive the look and feel of the show branding, while the business manager used a core capability in organization and technology to manage contracts. Organizational leaders outsource the production of communications, advertising, and GSX products to local suppliers who have contacts and expertise to deliver products and services on time and within budget. GSX key work systems include developing and executing annual hotel contracts; developing and executing vendor contracts; marketing and advertising initiatives, including managing the GSX website, Facebook, and social media; Show staff and volunteer management; and stakeholder relations and customer service as related to developing and executing vendor contracts.

Regarding work system decisions that facilitate the accomplishment of the company strategic objectives, GSX leaders use evidence of performance outcomes and inputs from vendor surveys and communications to inform and facilitate the accomplishment of strategic objectives. GSX leaders determine future competencies and work system requirements based on continual scanning of relevant literature for and about the hobby, including direct observation of hobby participation and events by attending national and international shows and events.

Key strategic objectives. GSX key strategic objectives, prioritization, and the timetable for achieving them are identified in Table 7.

Table 7

GSX Key Strategic Objectives

Key strategic objectives	Priority rank	Short term (annual)	Longer term (3 years)
Increase show participation	1		X
Number of vendors			
U.S. vendors			
International vendors			
Number of tables			
Number of room nights			
Show attendance (Sunday)			
Number of first-time attendees			
Number of recidivists			
Families with young children			
Improve vendor satisfaction	2	X	
Improve contract process efficiency			
Improve communications			
Recognize and reward loyalty			
Improve hotel support services			
Negotiate GSX group room rates			
Improve room reservation interface			
Improve room turnaround time			
Comply with regulatory requirements	3	X	
Incorporation			
State DR			

Increase Marketing, Branding, Promotion	4	X	X
Ads in U.S. hobby publications			
Ads in international hobby publications			
Online ads and announcements			
Improve and update GSX website			
Improve and update GSX Facebook			
Increase social media interaction			
Increase collaborations and partnerships	5		X
Ohio Valley Military Society			
Local museum			
Militaria shows			
Antique collectable shows			
Antique malls			

Planned key changes in GSX products, customers, markets, suppliers, partners, and operations include anticipating, monitoring, and mitigating changes in vendor participation and Show attendance due to tax regulations, changing demographics, and competing hobbies.

Strategic objective considerations. GSX leaders balance value for all key stakeholders by aligning strategic objectives with the company mission, vision, and values. In addition, leaders address their strategic challenges and leverage their core competencies, strategic advantages, and strategic opportunities by tapping into the owner's depth of knowledge and experience in hobby collecting; the leaders' history of engagement with the previous owner's show; and their ability to plan strategically and execute the plan. The GSX co-owners address strategic challenges by focusing on improving and increasing show participation among all key segments, focusing on

increasing advertising and awareness of the hobby and the Show, and establishing connections with affiliated hobbies.

Strategy implementation. In the following subsections, I provide an analysis of how GSX leaders implement strategy including plan implementation, resource allocation, performance measures, and projections.

Action plans. Key short- and longer-term action plans, including the relationship to the GSX strategic objectives are identified in Table 8.

Table 8

GSX Key Action Plan to Strategic Objectives Alignment

Key strategic objectives	Action plan	2018	2021
Increase show participation	1		X
Number of vendors			
U.S. vendors			
International vendors			
Number of tables			
Number of room nights			
Show attendance (Sunday)			
Number of first-time attendees			
Number of recidivists			
Families with young children			
Improve vendor satisfaction	2	X	
Improve contract process efficiency			
Improve communications			
Recognize and reward loyalty			
Improve hotel support services			
Negotiate GSX group room rates			
Improve room reservation interface			
Improve room turnaround time			

Comply with regulatory requirements	3	X	
Incorporation			
State DR			
Increase Marketing, Branding, Promotion	4	X	X
Ads in U.S. hobby publications			
Ads in international hobby publications			
Online ads and announcements			
Improve and update GSX website			
Improve and update GSX Facebook			
Increase social media interaction			
Increase collaborations and partnerships	5		X
Ohio Valley Military Society			
Local museum			
Militaria shows			
Antique collectable shows			
Antique malls			

GSX leaders analyze performance outcomes; consult with former partners and professional advisors (including accountants, lawyers, and the tax attorney); consult with trusted representatives of key stakeholder groups; and achieve consensus on action plans, timelines for achieving them, and key measures.

Action plan implementation. GSX leaders establishes the timeline, assign duties, and monitors progress for the company action plan. Leaders share progress reports, collectively solve problems and address challenges, and monitor the implementation of all initiatives and outcomes.

Resource allocation. GSX leaders ensure that financial and other resources are available to support action plans by prioritizing strategic objectives and related action plans according to the organization's mission, vision, and values. For example, in

preparation for the 2017 annual Show, leaders dedicated resources (human and financial) to create a systematic process for recognizing loyal vendors and helpers. In addition, company leaders allocated human and financial resources in support of action plans to design and implement loyalty badges (bronze 10-year badges, silver 20-year badges, and gold 30-year badges) and name badges to honor the culture of the ongoing annual Show. In addition, leaders allocated human and financial resources to engage a vendor and artist in creating a GSX-themed treasure-hunt game for children, which aligns with the organization's mission to grow the hobby. GSX leaders allocated a budget to the company marketing manager to invest in print and online media to promote the 2017 and 2018 Show. GSX leaders approximate budget allocations and returns on the investments in prioritized budget allocations. Business leaders use data from vendor and participant surveys to make fact-based decisions about the allocation of resources to support maintaining, growing, and innovating processes.

Workforce plans. Key workforce plans to support GSX leaders' short- (annual) and longer-term (3-5-year) strategic objectives include leveraging the engagement of a volunteer workforce and managing the time and commitment of family and staff. GSX leaders offer volunteers stipends and payment-in-kind in return for their work to support the implementation of action plans. For example, volunteers provide security services in return for table contacts, room nights, and stipends. Family members provide services in return for room nights and stipends. GSX leaders monitor the time commitment of family and staff members to help prevent exceeding capacity. The family and staff frequently learn new skills to address changes in capability requirements, including website

development and social media marketing. Senior leaders lack a systematic approach to addressing the potential impact on the organization of unanticipated changes in workforce capability and capacity.

Performance measures. Key performance measures used to track the achievement and effectiveness of GSX action plans include the number of vendors (segmented by geographic location and type of merchandise), the number of Show tables, the number of room nights, the number of years loyal vendors have participated, and the number of Show participants (segmented by geographic origin, first-time attendees, and families). GSX leaders track total revenue from vendor contracts, total revenue from Show attendance, net revenue, overall progress in reducing the business bank loan, the level of vendor satisfaction (including analysis of complaints), the level of participant satisfaction, the level of response to online and print advertising, and the level of compliance with state DR and other regulatory requirements. Finally, all GSX leaders deem it essential that all key performance measures align with the GSX mission, vision, and values.

Performance projections. GSX leaders' key performance projections are to continue to meet or exceed annual hotel contractual obligations for the number of room nights and to increase revenue and reduce the bank loan. Company leaders also systematically review and participate in similar shows and events across the United States and internationally to gather data and information related to current and future performance projections as these projections relate to the vitality of the hobby. These efforts to participate and observe broadly reflect GSX leaders' approach to developing

benchmark and comparison data for the hobby. GSX leaders collaborate and compare data and information with the managers of other niche hobby events and shows.

Increasing awareness and participation in the hobby benefits all collectors and show managers; therefore, GSX action plans reflect the strategic objective to grow the collector hobby, generally. Finally, because GSX is a small, family-owned and operated organization, leaders can execute modifications to action plans quickly if circumstances require a rapid shift in plans and execution.

Customers

In the following subsections, I provide an analysis of how GSX leaders engage their customers for enduring success including the voice of their customer, customer expectations, and key relationships.

Voice of the customer. In this section, I provide an analysis of how GSX leaders obtain current and potential customer information including customer satisfaction and engagement methods.

Current customers. As of 2017, GSX customers included hobby enthusiasts, collectible traders, vendors, friends, and family. Leaders throughout all areas of GSX not only listen to their consumer groups and market segments during the annual Show, but also during various touchpoints throughout the year. These touchpoints include interactions while at additional trading venues, inputs receive via GSX social media platforms, and by additional electronic media venue contacts. GSX leaders engage in ongoing conversations with the aforementioned contacts to secure feedback as

appropriate, which affords potential customer leads. These new leads provide direct feedback about the annual GSX Show, emerging trends, and potential market segments.

Potential customers. Potential customers for GSX include new entrants from the vendor, collector, product supply, manufacture, and distribution market spaces. By listening to former and current customers, GSX leaders obtain information from these potential customers to advance business into additional market space. GSX leaders apply customer voice feedback to balance tradition with possible requirements of advancing the current hobby through the next few decades. A significant portion of consumer feedback pertains to providing balance to long-term tradition versus future, intelligent risk-taking.

Satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and engagement. The primary method that GSX leaders use to determine customer satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and engagement is an annual survey of vendors. Senior leaders from GSX also poll customers, vendors, distributors, and others during the annual Show event. Information from the polls and the surveys identifies motivators and drivers of customer engagement, requested Show changes, outreach areas, and potential emerging market space. Long-term engagement relies on GSX leaders compiled observations serving as the basis of future consumer engagement, marketing, and product innovation.

Satisfaction relative to competitors. GSX leaders obtain customer satisfaction information relative to other organizations through direct and indirect engagement opportunities. Direct engagement opportunities occur during the annual Show, vendor sponsorship initiatives, visiting other organization's venues, and various speaker

engagements. Indirect engagement is primarily through electronic means such as social media and website connections.

Customer engagement. In this section, I provide an analysis of how GSX leaders engage their customers and build relationships including data on product offerings, customer support, segmentation, and relationship management.

Product offerings. GSX leaders determine product offerings by analyzing trends in the antique collectable hobby, by studying websites, social media, and publications (foreign and domestic) related to the hobby, and by observing trends via participation and attendance at national and international collectable shows. Leaders also compile data and information gathered through literature reviews and observation, which serves as the basis for marketing and innovation. In addition, GSX leaders engage in ongoing conversations with vendors related to the successes and failures of their business ventures and by monitoring social media for trends in historic and modern collectables for younger generations. In their niche hobby, innovation versus customer feedback requires balancing the value of tradition and the requirements of advancing the hobby in the 21st century. GSX leaders are not deaf to the voices of current, loyal customers, but seek to avoid the negative impact on the sustainability of relying too much on tradition. Finally, company leaders seek to balance valuing tradition with the value of taking intelligent risks.

GSX leaders note that current vendors are not consistently informed and aware of emerging trends in the hobby. The co-owners often refer to Henry Ford who is supposed to have said, *“If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster*

horses.” Adaptations in product offerings include exploration of partnerships with Legos, exploration of 3D printing to create *customized* collectables (an ongoing effort), exploration of expansion to include toy trains (a 2017 sponsorship), and more.

Customer support. In 2017, GSX leaders revised the organization’s website to include enhanced opportunities for customers and stakeholders to obtain timely information and access services, including vendor contracts online. The GSX website includes a dynamic countdown to the upcoming show, images of the previous show and archives of prior events, frequently asked questions, links to hotel room reservations, and more. The GSX Facebook page hosts exchanges between and among vendors, show participants, and the GSX business manager. Company leaders’ key methods of customer support are leaders’ communication processes, GSX website services, access to the show manager and business manager via phone and e-mail, advertisements and U.S. Postal Service communications, including reminder postcards, show contracts, and holiday cards. In general, customer groups and market segments do not segment communications.

GSX leaders determine their customers’ key support requirements through regular communications (formal and informal), monitoring social media, Facebook exchanges, telephone, e-mail, observation via participation and attendance at hobby events, publications, and more. Company leaders deploy these requirements to all people and processes involved in customer support. GSX is a small, family-owned and operated organization; therefore, company leaders manage the deployment of customer requirements to all people and processes involved in customer support via personal communications between and among leaders.

Customer segmentation. GSX leaders use information from observations and review of relevant literature and social media to identify current and anticipate future customer groups. For example, trends in the hobby industry—as evident in advertising and social media—provide evidence of current and future customer groups. As noted previously, members of this hobby collaborate to build the hobby and maximize interest in these shows and events. Finally, GSX leaders balance responsiveness to tradition with intelligent risks and ventures into new markets to grow and sustain the hobby.

Relationship management. GSX leaders build and manage customer relationships by basing actions on the organization's core values (e.g., honor the founders and their vision; operate with honesty, integrity, and transparency; support local suppliers and vendors; engage family in the business; and provide vendors with community, camaraderie, and enjoyment). A prime example of values-based decision-making process includes GSX leaders' response to a state DR request for a list of vendors and contact information. Company leaders consulted widely, including engaging former partners, current vendors, and a state tax attorney in developing an honest, transparent response to the state DR requests in compliance with the requirements of the organization's regulatory environment.

GSX leaders' values-based actions build the company brand by establishing and reinforcing a culture of community and camaraderie between and among vendors and annual show participants. GSX leaders also enhance their brand image by delegating key leadership roles to family members, which is evidence of the leaders' commitment to engaging family members in the hobby. GSX leaders design and implement processes

and activities to attract an audience of show participants who understand that the show is a family activity and a learning opportunity for all. The business leaders retain current vendors and meet their needs, expectations, and requirements by acting upon the voice of customer data and information. This information includes quantitative and qualitative data obtained through observation, surveys, one-on-one conversations, and review of current trade literature. Company leader's base organizational policies and processes on analysis of customer inputs, including all complaint data.

GSX leaders leverage social media by maintaining an up-to-date website and maintaining, monitoring, and interacting with Facebook messaging. Organizational leaders do not tweet from the show, but vendors and participants do. Since 2016, local television crews have visited the show and aired footage in evening news reports. GSX leaders engage vendors and suppliers with media skills to develop promotional materials suitable for social media, including a selfie booth managed by a professional photographer, capturing images during room trading and the show, and videos of show attendees.

Complaint management. GSX leaders invite, receive, and respond to complaints from vendors and show participants using multiple media conduits, including face-to-face conversations, telephone conversations, e-mail communications, and survey results. Most complaints are received and resolved through such communications. Company leaders invite and respond to complaints from key partners and suppliers in regular meetings to review performance and in annual contract negotiations. GSX leaders also inform partners and suppliers of the organization's mission, vision, and values. All partners and

suppliers understand that GSX leaders make decisions and take action based on these values; failure to comply with GSX values could result in the termination of contracts and agreements.

Results Triad: Workforce, Operations, and Results

Workforce

In the following subsections, I provide an exploration of how GSX leaders assess their workforce capability and capacity, overall GSX workforce environment, and how GSX leaders engage, manage, and develop their workforce.

Workforce environment. In this section, I provide an analysis of how GSX leaders build a productive and supportive workforce environment including overall capacity, capability, and climate.

Capability and capacity. GSX leaders' initial approach to assessing workforce capability and capacity needs was to use the staffing model established by predecessors as the basis for structuring workforce positions, roles, and responsibilities. For example, over time, the previous show manager identified key work processes (table contracts and assignments, room contracts and assignments, database management, show crowd management) and assigned these roles to himself, family members, and loyal volunteers. In 2016, the first year of current Show ownership, GSX leaders similarly identified workforce roles and responsibilities according to key work processes. In this setup, the show manager assumed responsibility for table contracts and assignments, and room contracts and assignments, with assistance from the quality manager. The show business manager assumed responsibility for all website and database management. The marketing

manager consulted with previous partners to determine the type and placement of previous advertisements. The loyal volunteers were asked to continue to perform crowd management and security roles.

In 2017, GSX leaders refined workforce roles based on lessons learned and evidence of workforce members' emerging preferences and developing skill sets. In addition, changes to Show activities, including implementing a social hour in the hotel bar to replace the Saturday-afternoon registration and reception. Leaders implemented a lobby Show registration desk in 2016 and refined it in 2017. GSX leaders initiated Show merchandising in 2016 and augmented merchandise in 2017 with increased items for purchase. Several of these refinements required diverse levels and capabilities of staff. GSX leaders assess the skills, competencies, and staffing levels needed based upon analysis of data. This data included Show attendance, the number of Show tables, the number of room nights, vendor needs, expectations, requirements, and vendor complaint data.

New workforce members. Staff members of GSX are engaged in achieving the company mission and vision via drivers such as the shared interest in the success of the annual Show, the viability of the hobby, and family loyalty. The two business partners concur there is a requirement for additional staff at the annual Show especially in the areas of security, consumer relations during the annual Show, and physical security for theft prevention. Further staff requirements include areas of safety and security for vendors and participants in collaboration with the venue (e.g., fire and emergency evacuation). The business leaders' train additional staff to ensure that all GSX members

are familiar with emergency procedures, including evacuation according to the venue protocols.

GSX leaders recruit family members and loyal volunteers from among family members, in alignment with the organization's core value of engaging family in the business. For example, to address increased interest in show merchandising, GSX leaders engaged a Chicago-area first cousin with a strong background in sales to manage the merchandise table. Whereas to address the need for help at the photo booth, GSX leaders engaged a Chicago-area niece and her friend to help children and family members with uniforms and equipment at the photo booth.

By focusing on engaging family and loyal volunteers to assume key workforce roles and responsibilities, GSX leaders help to ensure that workforce members represent the values of the organization, including honoring the founders; operating with integrity, honesty, and transparency; and providing vendors with community, camaraderie, and enjoyment. Vendors and Show attendees enjoy watching colleagues' children grow from year to year. GSX leaders firmly believe that they are modeling the Show's culture by valuing and engaging family. Company leaders consider the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competing priorities of family members and volunteers as inputs for ensuring the fit of new workforce members in the organizational culture. As an example, a family member or volunteer with young children or health concerns is unlikely to be able to make and sustain a commitment to the Show. GSX leaders adjust assignments and expectations, accordingly.

Workforce change management. Company leaders acknowledge there are additional increased workforce projections for the next 1-3 years. The staff has been augmented each year for the last 3 years by adding additional helpers and members of the owners' extended family (volunteers). As of 2018, there are no specific educational requirements for the various employee groups or segments at GSX. There are formal briefings that outline the presentation of Show requirements delivered by one of the two business partners. In addition, 2017-2018 workforce requirements and changes include agile process improvement, direct involvement with onsite events coordination for the annual Show, vendor placement and product comprehension, and quality interactions with those supporting the annual GSX Show. During 2018, GSX leaders developed a formal quick reaction card for direct staff engagement if the need arises. By following the quick reaction card, all staff knew how to contact the required company leader to solve the problem immediately.

Regarding workforce change management, its needs, and the organization's needs to ensure continuity, prevent workforce reductions, and minimize the impact of such reductions, if they become necessary GSX leaders act in alignment with the organization's mission to honor the culture and grow their collectables hobby. Therefore, the strategic objectives and related action plans that align with increasing the numbers of Show vendors and participants and increasing the numbers of room nights are top priorities. A key to minimizing the impact of workforce reductions is to help ensure the continued growth of the Show.

GSX leaders prepare for and manage workforce growth by maintaining communications and connections with family, with loyal volunteers (and their families), and with former partners (and their families). All business leaders prepare workforce members for changes in organizational structure and work systems by acting upon the core value of transparency. Specifically, regular and frequent two-way communications, including face-to-face, virtual, and synchronous, are channels for sharing information, gathering feedback, and preparing for change.

Work accomplishment. Regarding management of the GSX workforce, leaders organize and manage workforce members according to the organization's key work processes and the individuals assigned as accountable for those processes and related support processes. Company leaders also capitalize on the organization's core competencies, such as the show manager's standing in the hobby community as a collector, artist, and historian; the Show's standing as an international event; and the Show's standing as one of America's largest and longest-running hobby shows, by leveraging the engagement of family members and continued involvement of former partners.

GSX leaders' demonstrated loyalty to family and predecessors reinforces strong company values. Through their commitment to the Show and family values, GSX leaders and workforce members maintain a focus on the organization's mission-driven, vital few strategic objectives (VFSOs), which align with goals to honor the culture of the show and grow the collecting hobby. Such focus on VFSOs helps to ensure that performance outcomes not only meet but exceed performance expectations.

Workplace environment. GSX leaders and workforce members work from home offices that are equipped to help ensure workplace health, security, and accessibility. During the Show, company leaders depend upon the hotel leadership's compliance with regulatory requirements for health, safety, and accessibility to help ensure the safety and security of vendors and show participants. GSX leaders develop the hotel conference staff leaders' daily group reports (DGRs) that outline logistical requirements for each day of the Show. GSX leaders ensure annual contracts with the hotel specify health, safety, and security requirements and then translate these into DGR action steps. GSX leaders maintain required insurance coverage for the annual event. Consistent with GSX values of supporting local suppliers and partners, a local state insurance broker manages the annual insurance policy. Performance measures and improvement goals for overall workplace environmental factors solely include items that directly integrate with GSX MVV. These items include contracts, marketing, advertising, customer relations, work systems, and more. Differences among workplace environments related to differences in home office settings. GSX leaders do not maintain performance measures and targets for home office environments.

Workforce benefits and policies. Concerning support for workforce via services, benefits, and policies, GSX leaders comply with federal requirements for contract workers. As a prime example, the company's business manager completes the IRS Form 1099 and business leaders file data related to payments annually in the GSX tax return. Workforce benefits sometimes include quid pro quo agreements of show tables and complimentary rooms in exchange for volunteer service in crowd management and

security. To tailor the needs of a diverse workforce and various workforce groups, the GSX show manager negotiates quid pro quo benefits with individual members of the total workforce depending upon individual needs and requests. In addition to the benefits described, GSX leaders offer workforce members the added benefit and value of opportunities to engage with family in meaningful work in support of the hobby collecting community, opportunities to engage with people from all over the world, opportunities to expand their knowledge of history and art, and opportunities to strengthen family ties.

Workforce engagement. In the following subsections, I provide an analysis of how GSX leaders engage their workforce including drivers and assessment of engagement, performance management, learning and development, and organizational culture.

Organizational culture. GSX leaders foster an organizational culture that promotes open communication by designing and implementing communication processes that align with the core value of transparency. For example, the GSX show manager and business manager engage vendors and participants in frank, two-way communications via multiple media including e-mail, text messaging, telephone calls, and face-to-face meetings. GSX leaders also foster high performance and workforce engagement via emphasis on quality of services, including Show table contracts and registration, hotel room reservations, and customer relationship management. This engagement carries over into products such as Show merchandise, Show marketing, and branding materials. GSX leaders continuously encourage workforce members and partners to innovate, improve

work processes, and to implement tools, technology, and evidence-based improvements to increase productivity. For example, the GSX business manager, in conjunction with technology consultants, designed and implemented online Show registration and table contracts.

GSX leaders ensure that the organizational culture benefits from the diverse ideas, cultures, and thinking of the current workforce by continuously and systematically introducing immediate and extended family members into the business. In addition, company leaders help to ensure that the GSX organizational culture benefits from diverse ideas and thinking of its workforce. Business merchandise sales were modest in 2016 yet demonstrate a significant increase in 2017. Primarily this was a result of adding the sales expertise of a cousin that resides close to the annual Show. Similarly, engaging a niece to assist families and children with uniforms and equipment helped to ensure the success of the photo booth, which they introduced at the 2017 Show.

GSX leaders empower workforce members, including volunteers, by valuing and harnessing their knowledge and skills to drive performance outcomes related to strategic objectives and the organization's mission, vision, and values. When additional training and technology equipment is needed, GSX leaders' budget for the expense by balancing value for all stakeholders and weighing the expense against the return on investment relative to achieving the organization's short- and longer-term goals and fulfilling the mission. For example, in 2016-2018, GSX leaders invested in providing the business manager with training and consulting support to redesign the GSX website. In 2017-2018, GSX leaders allocated funds to allow the marketing manager to explore additional

opportunities related to using social media to promote the 2018 Show. Company leaders empower volunteers who suggest opportunities to improve Show security and crowd management to implement their process improvements in pilot ventures to test the effectiveness of such process refinements before full adoption and implementation. As an example, company leaders tried a change in crowd flow at the 2017 Show, which they aborted.

Drivers of engagement. GSX leaders use systematic design and deployment of surveys, and collection and analysis of informal and anecdotal data to determine key drivers of workforce engagement. For example, the show manager asks returning volunteers what form of compensation and engagement motivates them to remain engaged with the annual Show. Quid pro quo benefits and compensation, including complimentary room nights or stipends, are determined based on these drivers of engagement. GSX leaders generally segment workforce groups according to family members (show leadership) and volunteers (show staff). The drivers of engagement differ according to ties of family relationships and opportunities for quid pro quo benefits and compensation.

Assessment of engagement. GSX leaders assess workforce engagement by evaluating productivity, loyalty, the commitment of time and effort, and willingness to suggest opportunities for improvement and innovation. Concerning formal and informal assessment methods and measures used to determine workforce engagement, including satisfaction, GSX leaders have not yet designed and implemented formal assessment methods to measure the satisfaction and engagement of family members. GSX leaders do

use results of customer satisfaction surveys to gather and analyze the satisfaction of volunteers. Regarding workforce retention, absenteeism, grievances, safety, and productivity, to assess and improve workforce engagement, company leaders view volunteer retention as a key indicator of workforce engagement. To date, workforce retention is 100%, and the workforce is growing as additional family members join the GSX workforce.

Performance management. GSX leaders do not use compensation, recognition, reward, or incentive practices, including promotions and bonuses, in a systematic performance management system. Instead, GSX leaders leverage the company values of family engagement and providing vendors and the community with enjoyment and an opportunity to honor the traditions of the hobby to support high performance and engagement among family and volunteer workforce members. All members of the GSX workforce know the organization's mission, vision, and values and use these foundational principles as the basis for daily operations. GSX workforce members are also aware of the short- and longer-term goals and understand their role and accountability in accomplishing action plans to achieve them.

Learning and development system. The GSX learning and development system supports the organization's needs and the personal development of their workforce members, managers, and leaders on an as-required basis. If additional training is needed, leaders make informed decisions before executing any additional expenses. Primarily, business leaders leverage the existing knowledge and skills of family members and volunteers. Leaders address the organization's core competencies, strategic challenges,

and achievement of short- and long-term action plans via systematic alignment of these items to key workforce plans.

Learning and development effectiveness. GSX leaders evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of workforce learning and development by gathering and analyzing the results of key processes. These processes include show table contracts, show registration, hotel room reservations, show participation, show security, and responses to marketing initiatives. Key performance measures are the direct result of the effectiveness of workforce learning and development. The correlation between learning and development outcomes with findings from the assessment of workforce engagement and key business results was reported in *Collection, Analysis, and Preparation of Results* (see p. 118).

Career progression. GSX leaders do not use a systematic approach to managing career progression. For example, neither the business manager nor the sales manager has an interest or desire to assume the show manager role. Most GSX workforce members do not aspire to career progression within GSX, although all members of the GSX workforce leverage their Show roles and responsibilities to support advancement in their other professions. GSX leaders do manage career development for workforce members by providing opportunities for family members and volunteers to develop knowledge and skills through training and hands-on application. In 2017, the GSX sales manager developed new expertise in web design and maintenance via training and collaboration with local consultants (a key supplier). The GSX marketing manager developed new knowledge and skills in using social media by participating in a workshop and applying newly acquired skills in negotiations with suppliers of print and online media marketing.

However, GSX leaders lack a systematic approach to executing succession planning for management and leadership positions.

Operations

In the following subsections, I provide an exploration of how GSX leaders design, manage, improve, their work processes including innovation, operational effectiveness, consumer value, and company successes.

Work processes. In this section, I provide an analysis of how GSX leaders design, manage, and improve key company processes including process management, improvement, implementation, and key support processes.

Product and process design. GSX leaders determine key requirements for products, services, and processes via analysis of data and information related to customer and workforce needs, expectations, and requirements obtained from leaders' one- and two-way communications methods (Table 6). See Table 9 for GSX leaders' key work processes as aligned to key requirements.

Table 9

GSX Leaders' Key Work Processes Aligned to Key Requirements

GSX key work processes	Key requirements
Design and implement vendor contracts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. User-friendly, 2. Include key dates and logistical information, include payment options (online, paper via USPS), 3. Include state DR requirements, 4. Delivered on time, 5. Accurate and error-free, 6. Reflect GSX MVV
Negotiate and implement hotel contract	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Secures show dates 2-years in advance 2. Comprehensive 3. Includes agreed-upon terms for cancellation and negotiation of a minimum number of room nights 4. Includes negotiated room rates for vendors 5. Includes complimentary reward points 6. Includes information about dining, bell captain, registration, ATM, maintenance, engineering, and room set-up services 7. Serves as the basis for daily group reports (DRGs)
Design and implement print and media advertising	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhances/promotes GSX brand 2. Includes international publications 3. Addresses priority to attract families and children 4. Includes key publications, partners, suppliers 5. Highlights/leverages GSX core competencies and strategic advantages 6. Engages local suppliers for preparation of print materials

Design and implement customer-relationship-management processes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Addresses requirements of key customers and stakeholders 2. Addresses need to recruit/retain families and children 3. Honors long-time vendors, helpers, workforce, and participants 4. Exemplifies GSX values 5. Advances fulfillment of GSX mission and vision 6. Aligns with GSX strategic goals, objectives, and leverages core competencies and strategic advantages
---	---

GSX leaders design products and work processes to meet requirements by analyzing VOC data, workforce inputs, and trends in current hobby collecting and related hobbies to determine current and future needs, expectations, and requirements of key stakeholders (see VOC details, p. 87). GSX leaders also continually consult former partners and long-time vendors to help ensure that GSX products and processes honor the commitment and legacy of the past while exploring the leading edge of opportunities to grow and sustain their hobby.

Concerning incorporating innovative technology, organizational knowledge, product excellence, customer value, consideration of risk, and the potential need for agility in these products and processes, GSX leaders rely upon evidence-based research. Company leaders use this evidence-based research to incorporate best practices in using social media to promote their collectable hobby to young audiences and collectors in related hobbies. GSX leaders balance value for all key stakeholders, including at a minimum new target population along with and long-time vendors and partners, in

deciding what intelligent risks to pursue and the allocation of resources (human and financial) such ventures would require (see Drivers of Engagement, pp. 100-101).

Process management and improvement. GSX leaders help to ensure that the day-to-day operation of work processes meet key process requirements by monitoring expenses, stakeholder satisfaction, VOC data, and key performance measures. These measures include the number of tables sold, the number of room nights, and the number of Show participants. Company leaders use these measures to assess efficiency, effectiveness, and overall return on investment. GSX leaders strive to balance the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data and to value anecdotal information to the extent that such informal data and information might provide insights, leads, and opportunities to explore new markets.

GSX leaders incorporate key process measures and indicators to control and improve work processes (see Performance Measures, p. 86). Such measures related to end-product quality by demonstrating vendor participation, GSX performance compared to hotel expectations and goals for the number of room nights, and stakeholder satisfaction. GSX leaders determine key support processes by analyzing the steps in each key work process and related requirements (Table 9) and determining the support processes needed to execute the key work process in alignment with GSX strategic goals and objectives (Table 7). For all GSX key support processes, see Table 10.

Table 10

GSX Key Support Processes

Processes
1. Computer consulting to support the design and implementation of online vendor contracts
2. Hotel training of department personnel and oversight of suppliers (including ATM suppliers) to meet or exceed GSX contract requirements
3. Design and placement of GSX advertising and promotion in support of marketing initiatives
4. Social media, print media, and other communications to support customer engagement and relationship building across multiple generations and segments of vendor and show participant populations

GSX leaders monitor operations daily to help ensure that processes meet or exceed key business requirements. In addition, company leaders improve work processes continuously via communications with workforce members, partners, suppliers, and stakeholders. Leaders monitors key performance measures and implement action plans to improve the effectiveness of key work processes that fail to meet or exceed customer expectations and requirements.

Supply-chain management. GSX leaders use the organization value of supporting local suppliers and partners along with selecting and retaining suppliers and partners based upon analysis of their performance in meeting or exceeding the need, expectations, and requirements of leaders, customers, and other key stakeholders. Leaders also measure and assess suppliers' performance by comparing products and services to the leaders' standards for quality, brand enhancement, extent to which such products or services honor Show founders and provide vendors with camaraderie and enjoyment, and alignment with the GSX core competency of the show manager's standing in the hobby collecting community as a collector, artist, and historian.

GSX leaders provide feedback to suppliers to help them improve by responding promptly to product designs and providing actionable feedback, by swiftly addressing failures to communicate and meet contractual obligations, and by offering recommendations for improvement based on evidence and information from stakeholders. Business leaders additionally deal with suppliers who perform poorly by providing actionable, evidence-based feedback and timelines for improvement. GSX leaders replace suppliers who consistently fail to perform and improve with other local suppliers. For example, when a local graphic designer retired, company leaders provided actionable feedback to his successor until designs for GSX print materials either met or exceeded leaders' standards for quality and the ability to enhance the company brand.

Innovation management. GSX leaders pursue opportunities for innovation based upon analysis and assessment of inputs to the strategic planning process (Figure 3), analysis of VOC data (see VOC data, p. 87), and analysis of key performance measures (see Performance measurement, p. 113). In addition, GSX leaders systematically observe and note opportunities for innovation by participating in hobby shows and events in the United States and internationally to gather information and ideas about ways to enhance the GSX experience and services. Leaders continue pursuing opportunities based on analysis of VOC feedback, financial data, market share data, inputs from family and workforce members, former partners, and legal counsel if needed.

Operational effectiveness. In this section, I provide an analysis of how GSX leaders effectively manage operations including process efficiency, management of information systems, safety, and emergency preparedness.

Process efficiency and effectiveness. GSX leaders manage overall operational costs by maintaining a record of revenues and expenses in QuickBooks and reviewing the GSX balance sheet annually with a local company accountant. The accountant provides objective insights and advice regarding performance to budget for short-term (annual) goals. In addition, the GSX accountant provides advice regarding managing overall costs of operations concerning longer-term goals, including repayment of the business loan their local bank and maintaining the position of GSX as a desirable opportunity for purchase by prospective future owners.

The GSX quality manager is responsible for gathering and analyzing data and information related to cycle time, productivity, and other efficiency and effectiveness factors into key work processes. The quality manager's review of daily operations is ongoing; the data repository is growing. The goal is to create a body of evidence to support decision-making and process improvements. To date, improvements in cycle time include the following:

- A countdown to the upcoming show date on the GSX website that serves as a reminder to all about project-planning time remaining until the next show.
- Increased cycle time for the design and production of show advertisements and branding materials.
- Increased cycle time for deployment and receipt of table contracts and hotel room reservations facilitated by online registration processes.

- Increased cycle time for communications with vendors via electronic communications and social media.
- Increased productivity in communications and branding via close communications with local suppliers

GSX leaders strive to avoid rework because, as a small, family-owned and operated business, there is no time for error or rework. When errors occur, including potential misfiled documents, incorrect QuickBooks entries, and typos, GSX leaders log the errors to assist in monitoring patterns of error. In addition, company leaders immediately discuss, design, and implement process improvements to avoid recurrence of same or similar errors. For example, the GSX Sales Manager automated annual registration forms to alleviate tracking down missing client information. Warranty costs or customers' productivity losses are not applicable to GSX. However, the show manager and former partners often counsel vendors regarding strategies to increase sales by changing and improving the items they bring to the show. Currently, the show manager is also developing strategies to advise international vendors how they might avoid state DR scrutiny and resulting challenges with U.S. Customs by sharing tables and room sales with U.S. vendors. Costs associated with inspections, tests, and process for performance audits, is also not applicable to GSX.

In the first years of establishing ownership and the mission, vision, values, and culture of GSX, company leaders' actions demonstrate that the evidence-based needs of customers take precedence in decision-making processes over the need for cost control. For example, processes, name tags, ribbons, and loyalty badges to honor the founders of

the show, long-time vendors, and loyal helpers created an upfront expense for the design and production of materials that represent an investment in the branding and future of the Show over the leaders' need to control costs and repay the business loan. Similarly, upfront investments in branding the Show with banners, advertisements, flyers, and show merchandise represents GSX leaders' investment in responding to the interests, needs, and requirements of customers over the need for cost control.

Management of information systems. GSX leaders' contract with a local provider of computer services to ensure that GSX data and information are regularly backed up and secure. Company leaders help to ensure the reliability of show data and information via systematic processes for:

- Engaging multiple proofreaders of information before publishing via print and electronic media.
- Consulting multiple stakeholders to help ensure the credibility, reliability, and validity of data and information for and about the Show.
- Engaging a local supplier of computer services to assist in the design and implementation of web-based information.

GSX leaders ensure the security of sensitive and privileged data and information via robust and systematic communications processes with vendors and stakeholders (Table 6). As an example, GSX leaders' research on state tax laws and evidence-based communications with vendors and stakeholders related to DR requirements. In addition, GSX leaders regularly consult with the local supplier of computer services, GSX business manager, and hotel staff to maintain awareness of emerging threats to security. Company

leaders rely on a local supplier of computer services and the GSX business manager's and assistant show manager's expertise in cybersecurity to maintain awareness of emerging threats to security.

GSX leaders also depend upon and implement the advice of local supplier of computer services, GSX business manager and assistant show manager's expertise, and Baldrige criteria for cybersecurity to inform the design and implementation of processes to protect information systems and data from cybersecurity attacks. These initiatives include antivirus software, secure passwords, redundant systems, and off-site data storage. Company leaders' first concern in response to breaches in cybersecurity is the protection and attention to vendors and other customers. Accordingly, GSX leaders use communications systems to respond to and recover from cybersecurity breaches (see GSX Relationship Management, pp. 91-92; see GSX Organizational Culture, pp. 99-100)

Safety and emergency preparedness. GSX leaders use the hotel protocols for safety and security to provide a safe operating environment for the Show. GSX leaders secure home offices using home security systems, back-up computer systems, and strategic placement of alarms, telephones, and fire extinguishers to protect home and company property. GSX leaders store marketing and branding materials in a secure, climate-controlled storage facility provided by a local supplier. GSX leaders' contact with local suppliers, including security, pest control, bank, and accountants, to address accident prevention, inspection, and root-cause analysis of any failures to home-office security, data security, and the security of financial resources. See Table 11 for the complete list of all GSX safety indicators.

Table 11

GSX Safety Indicators

Safety measures
1. Local insurance
2. Local hotel
3. Local fire marshal
4. Timeliness of insurance rider
5. Safety plan
6. Inspection discrepancies
7. Show coverage
8. Modifications
9. Corrective action

Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management

In the following subsections, I provide an analysis on how GSX leaders select, gather, manage, and improve pertinent data including knowledge assessment and performance improvement.

Measurement, analysis, and improvement of organizational performance. An analysis of how GSX leaders measure, analyze, and improve organizational performance including performance measurement, examination, and review.

Performance measurement. GSX leaders select key performance indicators based upon the alignment of measures with MVV and key work processes. This configuration includes the development and implementation of the annual hotel contract; the annual table contracts; the marketing and media materials; the inclusion of the voice of the customer (VOC) and customer-relationship-building (CRM) processes; the workforce capability, capacity, and development processes; and the work systems and processes.

GSX leaders collect data and information using key work processes for VOC and CRM, including surveys and customer interactions. Business leaders gather information by monitoring responses to marketing and media initiatives, supply-chain management effectiveness inputs, and cost-control effectiveness data. GSX leaders maintain cost-control effectiveness via communications with their accountant and a local bank. Company leaders ensure data and information align with the company MVV. GSX leaders integrate data and information by identifying key measures that demonstrate progress and achievement in fulfilling MVV, and by meeting or exceeding short- and longer-term strategic objectives (Table 7).

GSX leaders select comparative data and information based upon industry research (see Strategy Considerations, pp. 78-79) and resulting knowledge of, and existing familiarity with, key competitor or comparable shows and events, including national and international venues. GSX leaders select VOC and market data and information based on the quality manager's expertise in quality engineering and data analytics. GSX leaders select VOC data and information by analyzing the frequency (quantitative analysis) and relative weight (qualitative analysis) of VOC complaint data derived from surveys and personal interactions, including electronic and face to face engagements. Finally, as a small, family-owned and operated S-Corporation business, GSX leaders ensure agility in the performance management system via personal communications and daily monitoring of processes and the relevance of performance measures and outcomes.

Performance analysis and review. The GSX quality manager uses methodological triangulation of data and information to help ensure data reliability and validity. Company leaders also ensure measurement agility via systematic approach to workforce communications, especially with business manager (Table 6) and systematic process to monitor and track data and information related to overall performance (see Performance Measures, p. 86). GSX leaders are the governance board; therefore, GSX leaders' processes are governance board processes. However, the reviews and comments by key suppliers are essential to informing and supporting GSX leaders' (governance board members') decision-making processes related to performance improvements.

Performance improvement. GSX leaders project future performance based upon what performance outcomes must be achieved to pay off the business loan and help to ensure that GSX is attractive to potential buyers. Because the children of the business co-owners have indicated that they do not intend to own or operate the show in the future, GSX current owners must prepare the organization for future sale by 2021-2023. Company leaders carefully monitor the state of the hobby collecting via personal communications with national and international vendors, attending collecting shows and events around the world to gain first-hand knowledge and experience, and analyzing performance outcomes and customer-satisfaction data and information. Differences between performance projections and projections for key action plans are reconciled and addressed via concerted and concentrated efforts related to marketing and promotion. That is, as one of the largest and longest-running shows of its kind in the world, GSX is an opinion leader in the marketplace, and GSX leaders understand and act upon their

responsibility to help shape the perception and reality of projected performance for the hobby.

Daily, at morning calendar and calibration meetings, GSX leaders review performance data and information to design, implement, and adjust priorities for continuous improvement and innovation. The GSX show manager and quality manager deploy priorities and opportunities to the business manager via daily and weekly text messaging, e-mail messages, and phone communications. GSX leaders deploy priorities and opportunities to members of the volunteer workforce via e-mail messages and phone calls, as needed. Finally, GSX leaders deploy priorities to key suppliers through face to face communications in meetings with local suppliers.

Information and knowledge management. In the following subsections, I provide an analysis of how GSX leaders manage organizational information and knowledge assets including data quality and availability, knowledge management, and organizational learning.

Data and information. GSX leaders verify and ensure the quality of organizational data and information by ensuring that multiple leaders, and stakeholders, as appropriate, proofread data for accuracy. As an example, the show manager, quality manager, business manager, accountant, and suppliers review print and advertising data for accuracy. GSX leaders use a systematic process to manage electronic and other data and information to ensure accuracy, integrity, reliability, and currency by using methodological triangulation of qualitative data and multiple reviews and improvements of processes to enter and verify the accuracy of quantitative data. Qualitative data

includes survey responses, whereas quantitative data includes reviews of Quicken entries and information submitted to the IRS and state DR.

GSX leaders ensure the availability of organizational data and information by posting results of surveys on social media and the company website for review by stakeholders. Company leaders share budget and other key performance measures with other leaders, key stakeholders, and partners, including their accountant and local bank representatives. Company leaders ensure needed data and information is available in a user-friendly format and timely manner to their workforce, suppliers, partners, collaborators, and customers, via their key communications processes (Table 6). GSX leaders rely on a local computer supplier and their business manager to all company ensure that information technology systems are user-friendly. Prime examples include the company's transition from paper-based to online contracts for vendors, redesign of the business website, including a countdown to show date, and a continual update of social media.

Organizational knowledge. GSX leaders collect and transfer workforce knowledge by continually engaging former partners (as appropriate) in their decision-making processes. Without a systematic process for succession planning (see *Mission and Organizational Performance*, pp. 67-68), GSX leaders do acknowledge a gap in systematic processes to transfer workforce knowledge to future leaders of the organization. The company leaders are avid researchers and combine their study of industry news and trends with onsite, real-time observations of national and international industry events, including collecting shows across the United States, Europe, and the

United Kingdom. Company leaders deploy satisfaction surveys to vendors and gather information from show participants to collect, analyze, and transfer relevant knowledge to key stakeholders. A recent knowledge transfer event was the posting of satisfaction survey results to GSX website and their social media site.

The assembling and transferring of relevant knowledge for use in GSX innovation and strategic planning processes include company leaders' strategy considerations (see pp. 78-79). As a small, family-owned business, GSX leaders share best practices in conversations between and among leaders. Company leaders identify high performing processes via systematic collection and analysis of performance outcomes. As lifelong educators and lifelong learners, GSX leaders embed learning in all key organizational processes. Systematic implementation of the PDSA performance improvement system ensures leaders study performance outcomes and make evidence-based decisions related to continuous improvement. As an example, based on evidence from vendor satisfaction survey, GSX leaders designed and implemented a change to their Saturday Show reception and hobby-related workshops and demonstrations.

Collection, Analysis, and Preparation of Results

Product and Process Results

GSX leaders work in a for-profit, family-owned and operated small business that specializes in a niche hobby located in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. GSX leaders purchased the business in 2016, and the primary business stream for GSX is an annual Show or event to display, sell, purchase, trade, exhibit, advertise, and learn about collectibles and related items. GSX's workforce comprises two business partners, three

staff members, and volunteers (Figure 1). GSX is a for-profit S-Corporation registered in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States and has a current asset total of \$75,000.

By collecting, analyzing, aligning and integrating organizational performance data and operational information, GSX leaders have increased efficiency and effectiveness in day-to-day operations. Under current leadership, 2016-2017 trend data depicts a 25% increase in contracts and tables, and a 26% increase in total room nights for the annual Show event (Figure 4). From 2016-2017, under new GSX leadership, total contracts increased; however, by implementing automation via online contracts overall process time decreased (Figure 5). Along with the added benefit of improvements in overall contract process time, online contract automation also decreased the total number of contract errors by 82% (Figure 5). GSX Leaders systematically manage operational information ensuring accuracy, reliability, and currency across the company supply chain. This organizational knowledge management drove quality improvement across GSX total transactions (Figure 6).

With a focus on both product and service quality throughout the year, the GSX leadership team ensures organizational value that results in increased customer satisfaction and company engagement. GSX leaders track product and process results in areas they deem strategically important; however, GSX leaders also acknowledge they can improve their overall tracking mechanism, schedule, and review cycle. Additional triangulation of product and process results data included linkages between GSX performance measures and information and knowledge management. For performance measurement, GSX leaders not only track what is strategically important for the

company, but also view through a critical lens what is achievable in their family-owned and operated small business. Further evaluation uncovered alignment of GSX key performance indicators (KPIs) to company MVV and end-to-end work processes. One prime example included GSX leaders listening to their customer's voices (via survey and direct interaction) to change annual Show work processes (funneling of gate day attendees and evening social). The GSX product and process results provided the operational basis for their customer-focused, financial, and market results.



Figure 4. Total contracts, tables, and room nights.

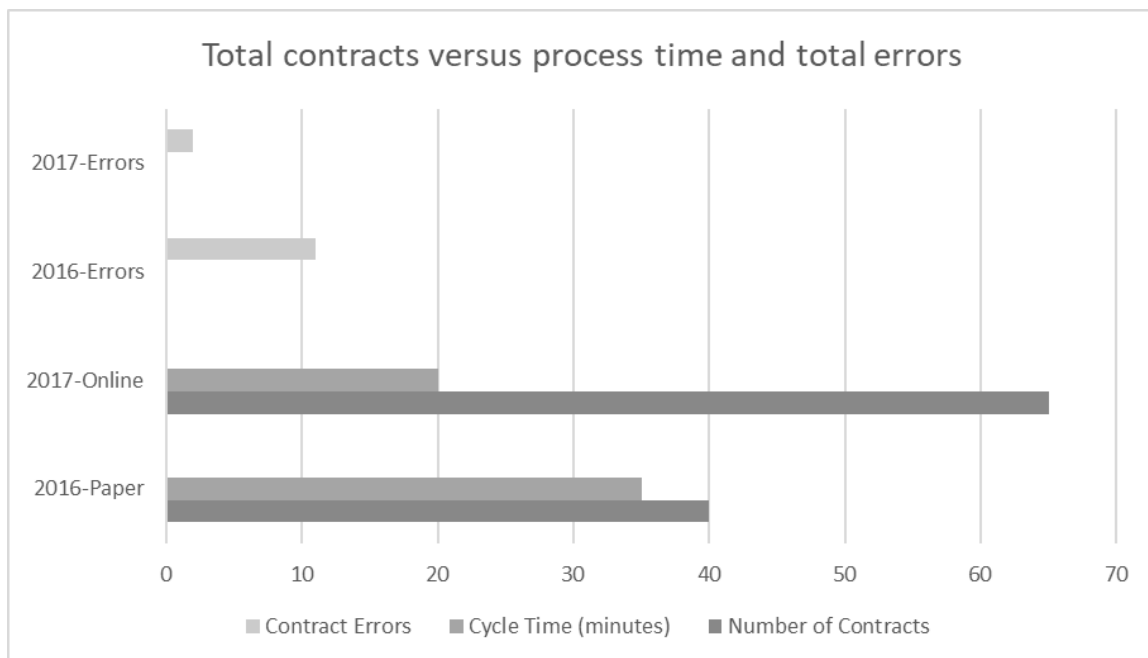


Figure 5. Total contracts versus process time and total errors.

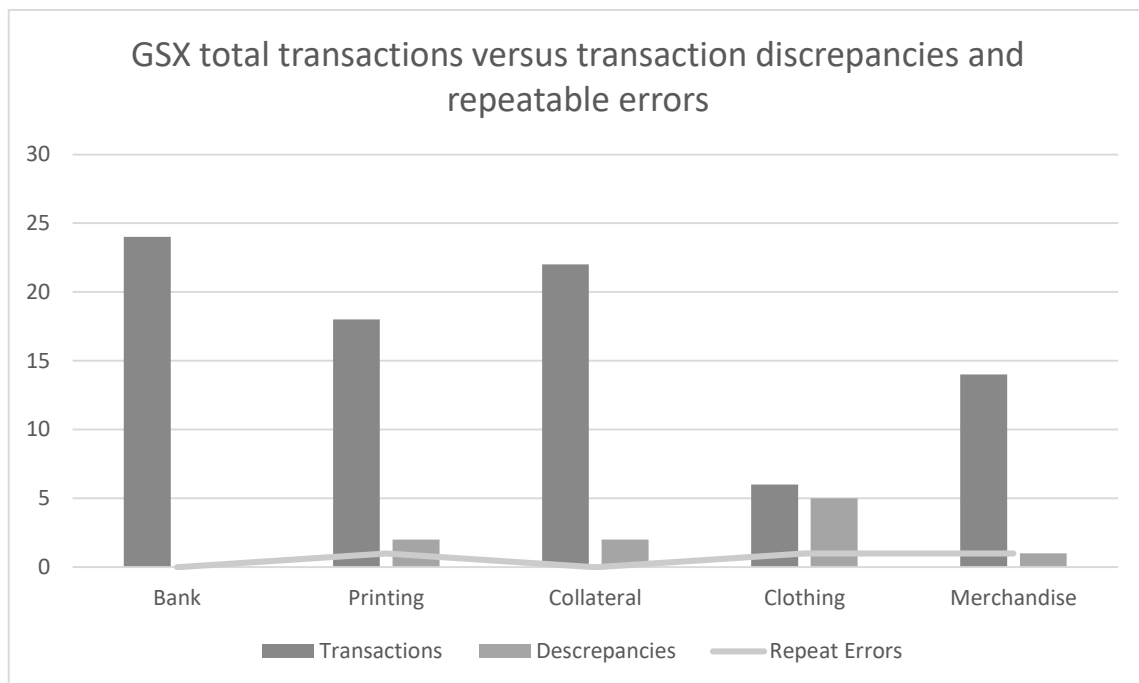


Figure 6. GSX total transactions versus transaction discrepancies and repeatable errors.

Customer Results

GSX leaders are adamant about supporting their global customer base through the company's MVV (Table 2). Leaders use their guiding principles to listen to, engage with, grow new, and retain satisfied, loyal GSX customers. Customer satisfaction outcomes are readily evident with GSX complaint management and resolution procedures, along with an emphasis on customer-focused results. Product and process results link directly to customer results, and a prime data point was in GSX leader's capture of complaint to contract information. Although total room nights, contracts, and tables increased from 2016-2017, additional trend data highlights a 50% decrease in customer complaints over the same 2016-2017 period (Figure 7).



Figure 7. GSX customer complaints over total contracts.

GSX leaders have a solid understanding of their key customers, stakeholders, and overall key requirements and expectations (Table 4). Leaders throughout GSX listen to

their customers during the annual show (tactically) and during various touchpoints throughout the year (strategically). By understanding the customer base, and listening to the voice of their customers, GSX leaders emphasize a customer-focused strategy across all business streams. Emphasis on customer engagement and relationship building is evident in collected data via an internally conducted GSX survey. This survey identified customer rationale for annual Show participation (Figure 8) and the customer suggested outreach, expansion, value add, and format changes for the annual Show (Figures 9-12). GSX leaders identified a need to post survey data on their website and potentially survey future Show attendees via post-show electronic mailers.

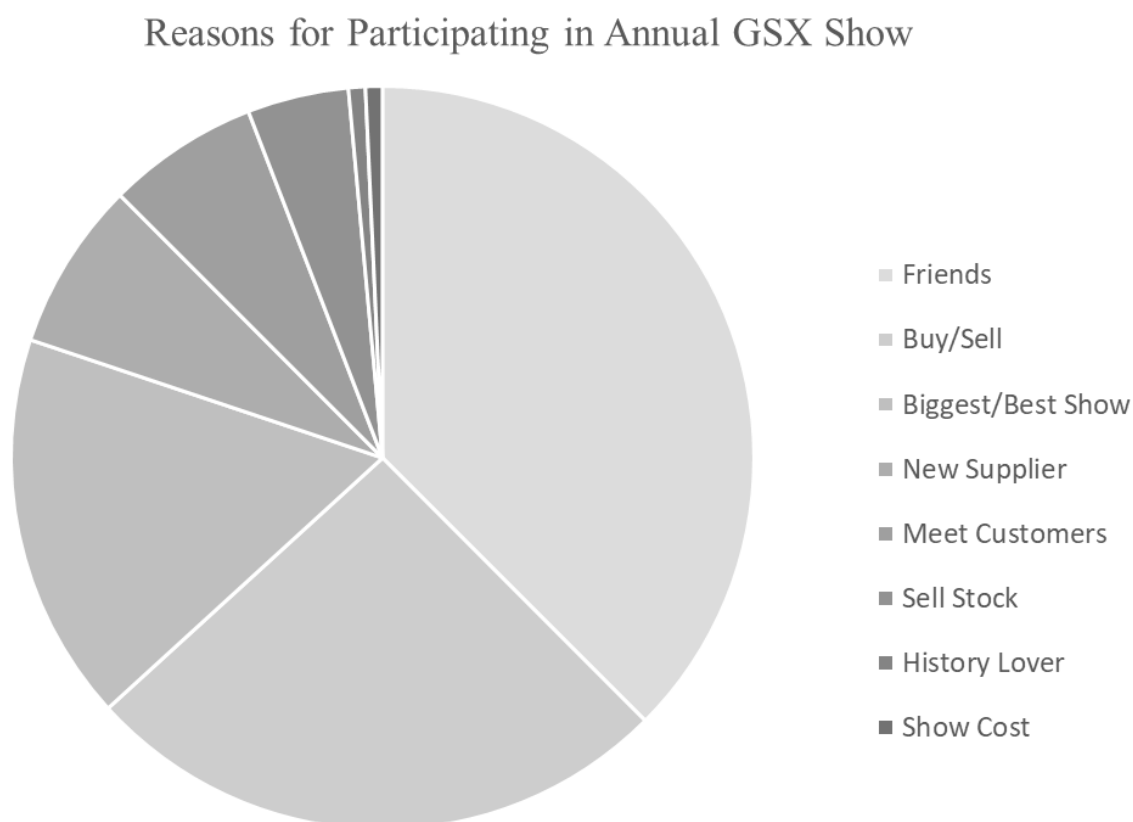


Figure 8. GSX customer rationale for annual show participation.

Suggested Outreach Changes for GSX Annual Show

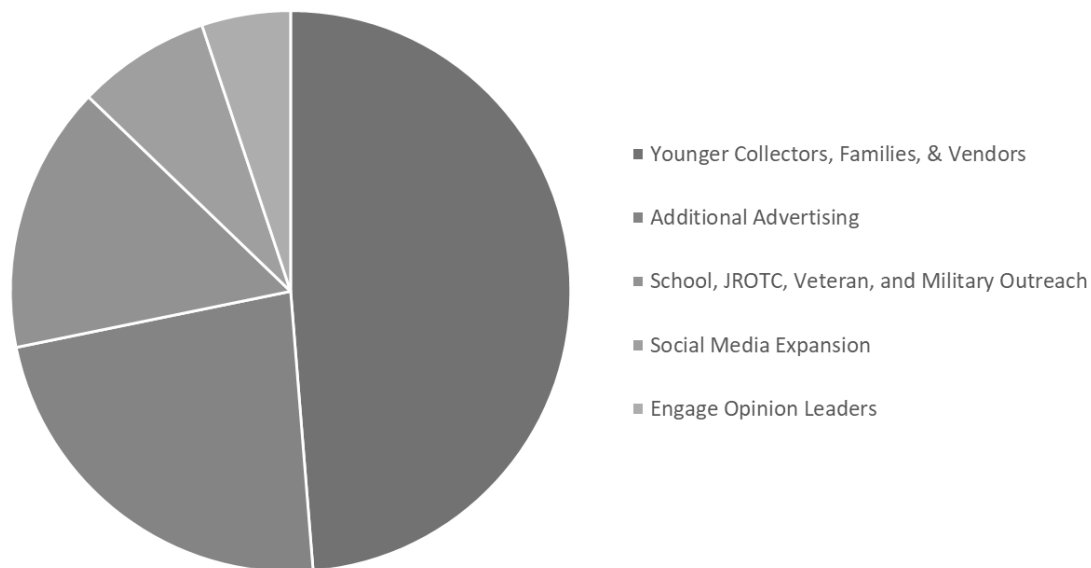


Figure 9. GSX customer suggested outreach changes for the annual Show.

Suggested Expansion Changes for GSX Annual Show

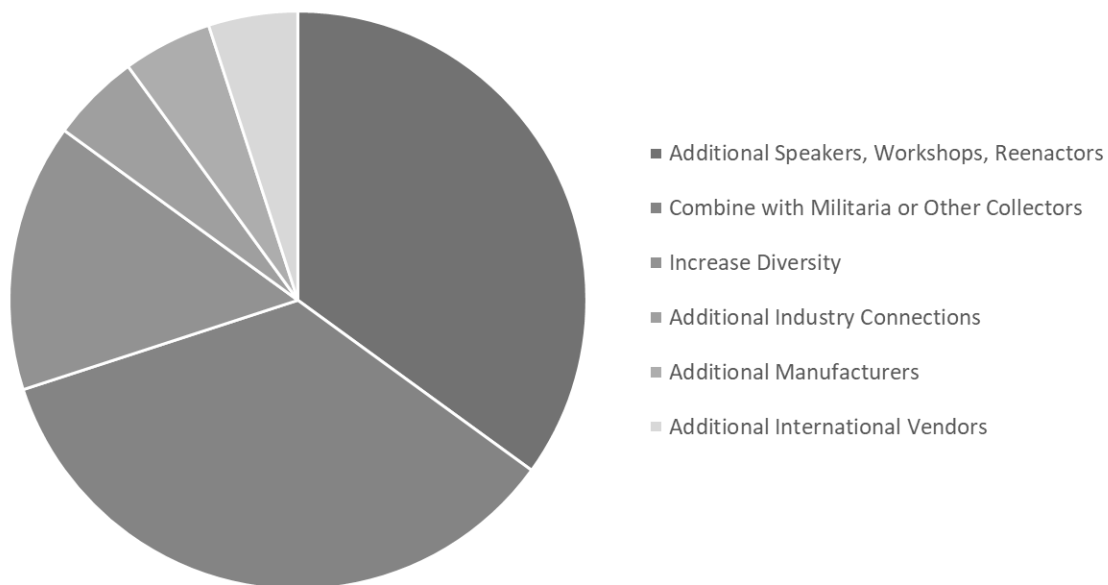


Figure 10. GSX customer suggested expansion changes for the annual Show.

Suggested Value Add Changes for GSX Annual Show

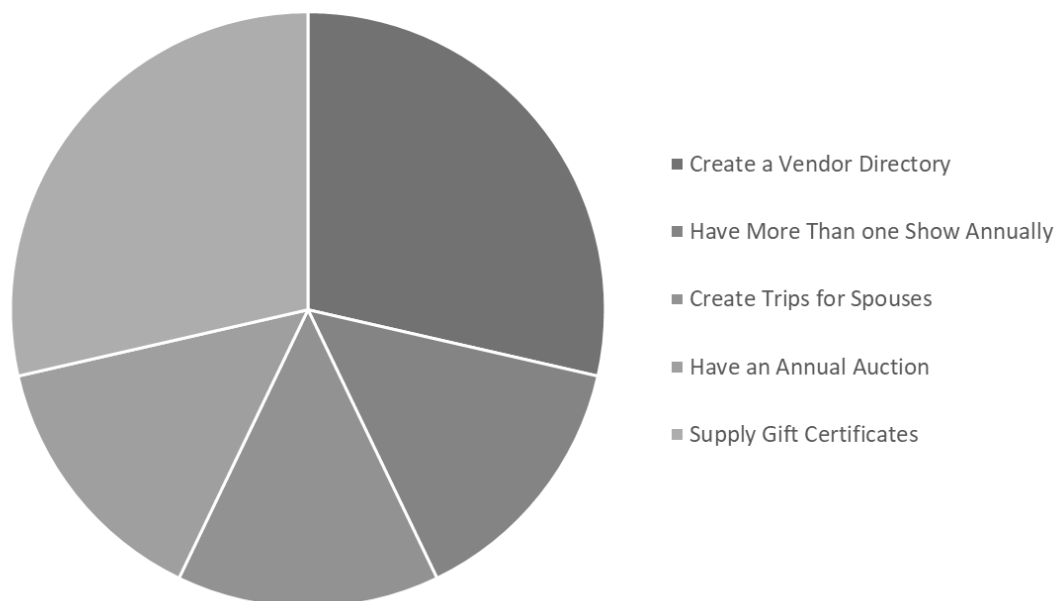


Figure 11. GSX customer suggested value add changes for the annual Show.

Suggested Format Changes for GSX Annual Show

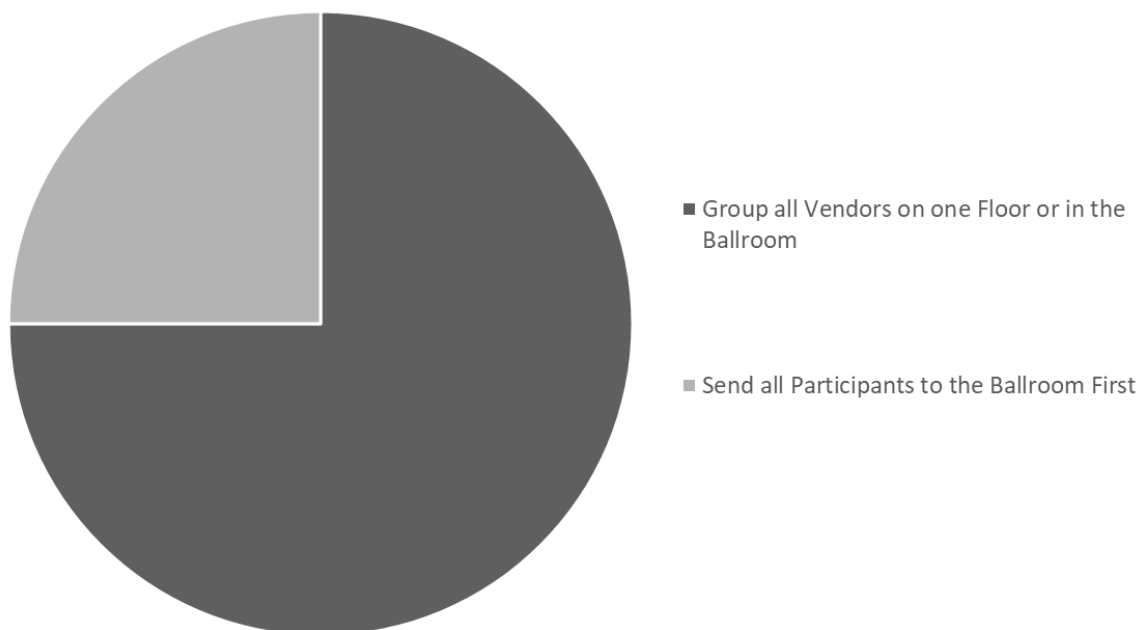


Figure 12. GSX customer suggested format changes for the annual Show.

Workforce Results

With the change in Show ownership to the current GSX leaders, the company is successful with five family members running specific business areas, along with a varied volunteer staffing structure (Figure 1). As GSX leaders seek strategic ways to garner business across the next generation of Show attendees, innovative workforce structure and staffing procedures to support the company Show occur annually. The GSX quality manager has created a body of evidence that supports company decision making and process improvements. The GSX quality manager, with the coordination of the entire leadership team, has mapped key work processes to requirements (Table 9). As of the 2018 Show, the GSX workforce could support all annual GSX processes. There were workforce challenges in 2018 due to the GSX Business Manager attending to personal family items during the annual Show. GSX leaders overcame these challenges by reaching out to additional family members (depth in volunteer support for business operations). With trending increases in total contracts, tables, and room nights (Figure 4), workforce capacity can easily exceed the staffing structure that was in place during 2018. This trend, coupled with the knowledge that family members have elected not to have the business passed on to them, requires the current GSX owners to develop a succession plan.

GSX leaders have created a learning organization by developing an engaged, productive, and caring workforce. Factors that support this analysis is the lack of leadership turnover, inputs of worker satisfaction during study interviews, and non-existent complaint or grievances from GSX staff. Further evaluation of GSX workforce

data highlighted that there has been a 100% retention of the volunteer workforce from 2016-2018. There are no union or bargaining units affecting the GSX workforce. The entire GSX workforce is engaged in decision making, knowledge sharing, and company growth initiatives. As a family-owned and operated small business, GSX leaders can reach out to additional extended family members to support the annual Show. This outreach augmented 2018 Show staffing and filled potential capacity gaps before they occurred.

Additional triangulation of workforce results data includes linkages between GSX workforce climate and engagement, work processes and operational effectiveness, and strategic action plans. GSX leaders made a strategic decision that their key strategic objectives were to increase Show participation; improve vendor satisfaction; comply with regulatory requirements; increase marketing, branding, and promotion; and increase collaborations and partnerships (for additional details see Table 8, pp. 83-84). As a top priority was to increase Show participation, GSX leaders focused on how to increase both the number of Show vendors and the total number of room nights (Figure 4). GSX leaders benchmark what their organization is accomplishing against competition in their marketplace and sought out avenues of additional potential Show partnerships.

GSX leaders foster a workforce climate and culture promoted to open communication. Workforce members utilize this open communication culture to engage both vendors and participants for innovative improvements in key business areas. These areas include marketing, advertising, customer relations management, and technology. Specifically, GSX leaders highlight the workforce engagement with technology

improvements with the online Show registration system as a contributing factor to increases in Show tables, contracts, and room nights. A positive result where GSX leaders engaged and emphasized their workforce was in the creation of their loyalty badge program. In this program, GSX leaders established a staff, vendor, volunteer, and annual attendance loyalty program. GSX leaders identified that they do not have a formal assessment mechanism to measure satisfaction and engagement of family members.

Leadership and Governance Results

All five members on the GSX leadership team either had the requisite skill set to perform their positional duties or possessed the ability to learn the work requirements. The GSX show manager and quality manager readily identified that informal communication processes were acceptable practices at first, but with company growth, formalized communication and meeting frequency would increase. GSX is ethically and socially responsible and all levels of leadership exhibit the highest of accountability standards. At the onset of company purchase, both owners understood each other's values and promoted legal and ethical behavior throughout all facets of the organization. Company leaders regularly emphasize the importance of holding not only company leaders, but also key suppliers and vendors to the highest of ethical standards. One resultant example on regulatory compliance pertained to GSX leaders' handling of the IDOR vendor information request. After seeking legal counsel, and receiving supporting evidence on actions to take, GSX leaders immediately communicated with all Show vendors. During this communication, GSX leaders were fully transparent, provided

supporting documentation to all vendors, and upheld their values of honesty and integrity (see pp. 69-70 for details).

GSX leaders use their MVV as guiding principles for upholding their leadership, governance, and societal responsibilities. A direct linkage from leadership to ethical behavior was the show manager's intervention of a vendor's display of objectionable content. This involvement was immediate, yet sensitive to both vendor sales requirements and the well-being of show attendees. Post show wrap-up activities included the Show manager briefing the additional leadership team on actions taken in this occurrence, rationale, and a team dialogue on what to do if this occurs during future shows. GSX leaders have an annual corporate meeting where they review the GSX MVV and previous meeting minutes; receive the president, financial, and area reports; review current and future initiatives; identify immediate areas of interest; cover old and new business; and review the next year's Show schedule. There is not a GSX requirement to select governance board members or provide disclosure policies, and GSX has not received any sanctions or adverse actions under law, regulation, or contract during the past 5 years. As of 2018, there is no requirement to survey or evaluate the effectiveness of GSX leaders.

Financial and Market Results

Financial data results from 2016 and 2018 depict GSX leaders having more capital outflow versus inflow (Figure 13). A positive trend would favor income exceeding expenses, the trend line for the first 2 years remained steady; however, for 2018 the trend line tracked positive. Company leaders comprehend that year-over-year expenses cannot continue to exceed income. GSX owners expected Year 1 expense to

income results to trend toward expenses exceeding income, primarily due to a vehicle purchase in 2016 for business use. Conscious business decisions based on strategic company outlook also drove business expenses exceeding income in 2017. Intelligent risk taking closed the income to expense gap in 2018 and the overall ratio trend tracked positive. The 2010-2015 financial trend data from the previous business owners tended to remain flat year-over-year for income to expense (Figure 14). A favorable trend line would depict year-over-year income exceeding expenses. A significant difference is the fact that previous owners paid themselves based on positive income inflow. Current GSX owners focus on commercial revenue and expenditures, along with product and process results, to support strategic business decisions, pay down business loan debt, and remain viable in their marketplace.

Indicators of marketplace performance are trending positively for GSX. One key indicator is the increase in total contracts, tables, and room nights for the annual show (Figure 4). Additional triangulation of financial and markets results data included linkages between GSX performance measures and resource allocation. GSX leaders' strategic objective of increased Show participation (Table 8) aligns to resource expenditures to support action plan implementation (for additional details see resource allocation, pp. 84-85). GSX leaders have also integrated novel processes, activities, and actions to drive increased business growth. Many of these processes and activities not only enable additional business growth, but also geared at bringing the next generation of the customer into their market space. Prime areas included activities geared to the

younger generation and encompassed technological refinements, which are both new product and marketplace growth areas.

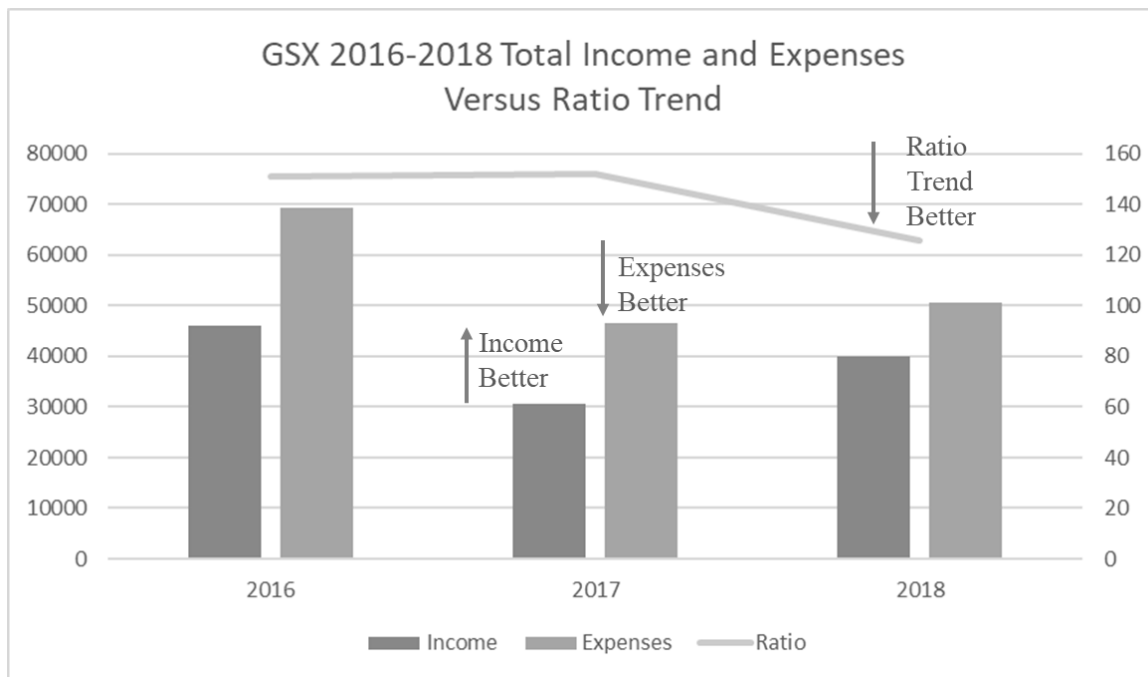


Figure 13. GSX total income and expenses versus ratio trend (2016-2018).

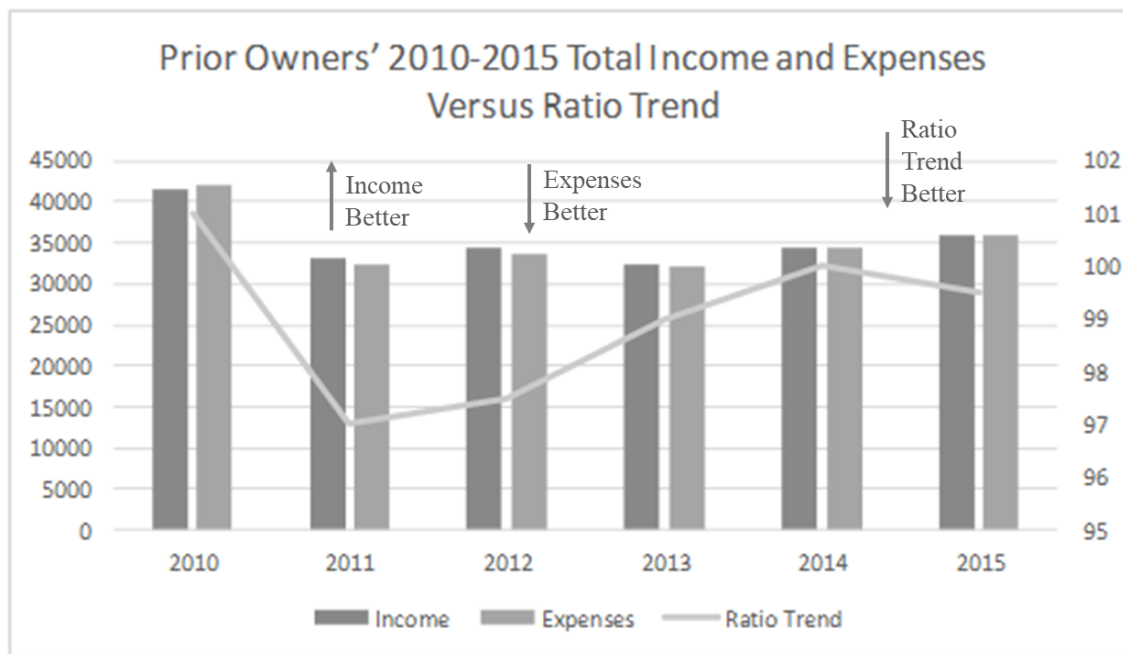


Figure 14. Prior owners' total income and expenses versus ratio trend (2010-2015).

Key Themes

Process strengths. The Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework was one lens used to explore process methods GSX leaders use and improve. Approach, deployment, learning, and integration were the four specific factors considered to evaluate GSX business processes. Leaders across GSX exhibit a primary process strength of a can-do attitude regarding comprehending and meeting tactical and strategic objectives that are coupled with a steadfast adherence to the company MVV. All processes across the continuum of GSX operations are focused on organizational improvement, and stem from the leader's defined strategic objectives. From improving communication and information dissemination to listening to the voice of the customer, GSX leaders have enabled year over year operational improvement.

GSX leaders and their staff deploy relevant process methodology aligned with their core values, ensuring consistent application to any approach. A secondary process strength was the enabling, via all levels of leadership, the engagement of a volunteer workforce into crucial business areas. This strength was evident in volunteer workforce usage in key operational areas during the annual GSX Shows. Deployment of historical, current, and novel volunteer processes was consistent and applicable across all GSX business units. GSX leaders refined their approach for volunteer placement into crucial processes based on the evaluation of previous Show data.

A tertiary process strength was GSX leader's ability to implement data-driven decision making across their business units and throughout all operational procedures. GSX leaders incorporate a continuous improvement cycle and evaluate processes and

procedures at various facets of their planning processes. All GSX business units are unencumbered by strict policy and are encouraged to communicate change, innovate in their business areas, and foster a spirit of can-do regarding change initiatives. Data-driven decisions were made based on taking intelligent risks, ensured relevant to the organization, applied consistently, and disseminated to the appropriate business units.

The final process strength was the ability of all leadership levels to comprehend the importance of procedurally engaging the next generation of customer and implementing strategic processes centered on these engagement opportunities. These engagement opportunities were repeatable and deployed via best practices across the organization. Process learning has occurred over the 3-years of current GSX business ownership. Learning approaches on what did or did not work well engagement-wise led to continuous improvement cycles including cross-organizational business units identifying relevancy in engagement opportunities for future customers.

Process opportunities. Organizational size was a crucial factor to consider when reviewing the context of process opportunities throughout GSX. There are opportunities for GSX leaders to focus on that will augment additional procedural improvements. A pivotal process opportunity centers on the development of a business succession plan. Along with the succession plan, GSX leaders should develop a business continuity process and plan. Additional process opportunities include developing a leadership survey mechanism, a systematic method of advancing technology across the organization annually, developing a formalized communication plan, and expanding processes that generate increased Show participation and overall vendor satisfaction. Opportunities also

exist in GSX leaders' development of a formalized performance evaluation process and metric. Finally, GSX leaders can realize workforce benefits by developing a workforce reserve staffing process. This process should identify current volunteer staff requirements, future growth potential, and volunteer pool areas to select from, aside from current family areas.

Results strengths. Level, trends, comparisons, and integration were four resultant strength area focal points for GSX in this study. Just as there were process strengths, so too were their strengths in these four areas of performance outcomes. With five family members running the primary GSX business units, performance is operating at levels consistent with larger-staffed organizations. Regarding performance trends, there are several areas where GSX outcomes are trending upward including annual contracts, Show tables, and overall room nights. These increases have been consistent from 2016 to 2017 with expectations of the same performance going forward.

Result achievement is integrated across GSX and linked from customers and products to company processes, plans, and goals. Additional result strengths were captured in GSX marketing, advertising, and innovation initiatives. GSX leaders are perceptive at benchmarking other Baldrige award recipient company best practices and incorporating them into their operations. Results identified improvements in data accuracy via technology integration, which realized the GSX leadership team an overall decrease in customer complaints. Trend data on increased Show participation is directly linked to the integration of VOC data to annual Show procedural changes. Although only

on their third year of business ownership, trend data over time depicts GSX performance on an upward slope across business units.

Results opportunities. There are opportunities for GSX leaders to focus on that will augment additional resultant improvements. Although identified as a process opportunity, a critical results opportunity also centers on the GSX business owners developing a succession plan that is executable in the 2021-2023 timeframe. Opportunities to further secure positive organizational outcomes also exist in areas of marketing and advertising. Performance data has trended upward for 3 years, GSX is still the company competitors benchmark off; however, leaders must continue focusing and integrating on VOC data to remain strategically viable. Results linked to customer engagement could trend upward if GSX leaders were to engage, expand, and partner with organizations out of their current marketplace. Historically, there was a West Coast competitor that recently went out of business. GSX leaders' research might show a West Coast niche that their organization could fill. Finally, GSX must get on a fiscal trajectory of income exceeding expenses versus current cash intake versus expenditures.

Project Summary

The purpose of this qualitative single-case study was to explore strategies small business leaders use to engage the next generation of customers to ensure sustainability for longer than 5 years. Gray and Saunders (2016) posited that small business leaders must strategically incorporate business strategies to garner business operations longer than 3- to 5-years. Using both the general systems theory and the 2017-2018 Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework as a lens and a template, I explored strategies

business leaders used to engage the next generation of customer to sustain operations longer than 5 years.

I started this project by reviewing my assigned organizations' leadership construct and governance system. GSX leaders possess the requisite skills to execute all business functions. My client organization leaders set company mission, vision, and values that are deployed across their workforce, partners, suppliers, customers, and various additional stakeholders. GSX leaders promote legal and ethical behavior across their organization, which was demonstrated by immediate involvement regarding objectionable material at their annual Show. GSX leaders engage and encourage frank, two-way communication across company business units and all key stakeholders. Leaders across the company initially employed informal business communication procedures but understand business growth demands a more formalized communication structure.

Leaders at GSX have focused on creating a work environment geared for success and performance achievement tempered with consumer value. Company leaders were not averse to taking intelligent business risks, specifically in areas that were focused on innovation and for securing that next generation of customer. Improvements are based on detailed research and leaders were sensitive to new interest perceptions and innovative achievement via an engaged workforce. Strategic planning started at the leadership level and was augmented by staff and VOC input. Transparency in operations, fiscal accountability, and protection of stakeholder interests by honoring the culture of the hobby aids business growth into the next generation of customer. All levels of leadership

drive leadership and governance success at GSX by coupling MVV to dedicated research in their marketplace, and then making research-based changes.

Strategy development and implementation were the next two focal points in this study. By reviewing past operational performance with a critical lens, GSX leaders were able to generate strategic objectives that aided business exploration securing the next generation of customer. An area of emphasis is the GSX leaders' ability to create a robust strategy development process, focused on a transformation vision of capturing the next generation of customer. Novel activities at the annual GSX Show tempered by short- and long-term planning horizons also linked to the next generation of customer. These activities included a selfie booth, a treasure hunt, costumed reenactors, and prizes given away during the annual show. GSX leaders implemented these activities based on analyzing Show demographics and noting a decline in the number of children attending their annual event. GSX leaders sought repeatable successes from their annual Show that engaged both family and younger generation attendees. By being a small, five-person, family-owned and operated business, GSX leaders had the agility to incorporate swift change and could rapidly focus on emerging processes. Strategy success factors included increases in first-time attendees, advancing GSX digital technology, benchmarking against competitors, and securing additional partnerships.

All levels of GSX leadership were attuned to the voice of their customer. Leaders at GSX obtained actionable customer information by listening to, engaging with, and observing both current and potential customers. The GSX show and quality managers analyzed current offerings and identified potential future inclinations to engage the GSX

publicity, sales, and business managers to monitor technology, including GSX social media, for generational trends. Determining customer needs and requirements for GSX product offerings and services is accomplished via in-depth, fact-based research. Changes in customer groups or segments balance tradition and culture to remain viable in the future. It is also noted that GSX leaders are extremely aware of the importance of customer relationship management to acquire, build, enhance, and manage market share. Bringing in additional sponsors and vendors already engaged with the next generation of customer and coupling these actions with emergent technology are avenues for GSX business growth.

The next focal points in this study were on measurement, analysis, knowledge management, and the workforce. At the onset of business ownership, GSX leaders knew to track what was essential and to keep a critical lens on what was achievable. Not only were leaders able to align KPIs with the company MVV, but they were also able to integrate key work processes to VOC inputs. Providing attendance loyalty badges was a novel idea that linked current customers to the next generation of customer. To acquire additional badges, customers would need to continue attending the annual Show. GSX leaders also collected operational performance measures to identify and analyze processes that were or were not working and then make intelligent, fact-based decisions on which to keep and which to retire. A significant portion of operational measurement focused on future operations and the involvement of additional activities geared toward children (that next-generation of customer). Successful activities included gaming geared toward children, younger aged activities throughout the Show, and workshops that

engaged younger audiences. GSX remains an opinion leader in their marketplace where they continue to shape the perception and reality of projected performance in the hobby.

GSX leaders also realized advances in the areas of information and knowledge management. By accomplishing quality cross-functional reviews, GSX leaders were able to move from paper to online contracts, redesign aspects of their website, and increase social media engagement. Vendor survey information drove changes in the Saturday Show reception and identified a need for GSX leaders to focus on the next generation of customer. Although GSX leaders' top priorities were to increase Show vendors, tables, and room nights, they did not discount the VOC data. As GSX leaders sought to increase global engagement, expansion efforts included bringing in that next generation of customer. This was accomplished via frank discussions, at all leadership levels, focused on key customer engagement areas that would capitalize on GSX leaders' MVV.

Turning to the workforce environment and engagement portion of this study, I engaged all levels of GSX leadership to assess workforce capability and capacity requirements. GSX leaders emphasize quality in service and product and support these quality areas via a workforce that is encouraged to innovate, streamline processes, and make evidence-based improvements. GSX leaders foster an organizational culture that is backed by open communication channels and empowers all levels of the GSX workforce to drive overall company performance outcomes. As of 2018 GSX leaders have realized a 100% retention in their workforce and retain the ability to reach out to additional family volunteers. This introduction of additional family members into business operations could potentially augment the lack of a GSX succession plan gap.

For the final portion of this study, I focused on GSX operations. As GSX leaders concentrate on future customer requirements, they look to improve the product and process design with the future generation of customer in mind. GSX leaders desire to continue honoring the culture of their annual Show; however, they do not want business to stagnate, and continuously keep a strategic eye on future operations. GSX leaders also comprehend that just as the Show is aging, so too are support services aging out. Leaders have already strategically considered these areas and placed service succession plans in motion. The GSX publicity manager identified marketing and advertising innovation management as a pivotal operational requirement, which requires future investment in additional branding, marketing, and advertising activities.

Contributions and Recommendations

Results from this study provide rationale why leaders should incorporate strategies to engage the next generation of customer to garner long term business success. A primary contribution for social change is the fact that engagement with the next generation of customer drives small business sustainability. With engagement processes and procedures at a strategic level, customer engagement could span generations. For-profit, small, family-owned and operated businesses benefit from this study via linkages in generational growth, small business engagement, and advances in specific marketplace geared to the next generation of customer.

A primary business recommendation for near term implementation is for GSX leaders to pen and execute a business succession plan. Following the creation of the succession plan, I recommend GSX leaders to create a business continuity plan focused

on the loss of their primary venue location. Additional recommendations include recruiting future generations of clients via active marketing, advertising, and social media program. Finally, successes across all major GSX business units are gained through technology advancements in overall website enhancements and a more aggressive social media optimization strategy.

For research recommendations, I recommend future researchers to explore strategies to engage the next generation of customer to garner long term business success through a lens that incorporates both qualitative and quantitative research and procedures. This recommendation is based on a potential mixed methods future study using the Baldrige framework. A future exploration recommendation would be for a researcher to go beyond exploring the organizational leadership level to surveying vendors, suppliers, and customers. Finally, I would recommend future researchers to incorporate a different conceptual framework besides general systems theory. Potential future study frameworks are ones focused on single- and double-loop learning theory, resource-based view theory, strategic management theory, or a theory grounded on the OODA model. I also recommend future researchers incorporate company data from more than one geographic location. The results of this study may benefit for-profit, family-owned and operated, small business leaders to strategically engage the next generation of customer ensuring sustainability for longer than 5 years.

Section 4: Executive Summary of Key Themes

Project Summary

The purpose of this qualitative single-case study was to explore strategies small business leaders use to engage the next generation of customers to ensure sustainability for longer than 5 years. As a participant in Walden University's consulting capstone, I worked with an assigned client organization. In this study, I incorporated a purposeful sampling method to engage with a population that consisted of five leaders working in a small, for-profit, family-owned and operated business: (a) show manager, (b) quality manager, (c) business manager, (d) sales manager, and (e) publicity manager. This business is in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States and supports customers globally.

The results reflected participants' perceptions over six process-focused areas of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework. These areas include leadership; strategy; customers; measurement, analysis, and knowledge management; workforce; and operations. Leaders of small, for-profit, family-owned and operated businesses who read this study may incorporate various strategies to engage the next generation of customer.

Contributions and Recommendations

Results from this study provide a rationale for why leaders should incorporate strategies to engage the next generation of customer to garner long-term business success. A primary contribution for social change is that engagement with the next generation of customer drives small business sustainability. With engagement processes and procedures at a strategic level, customer engagement could span generations. Small for-profit,

family-owned and operated businesses benefit from this study via linkages in generational growth, small business engagement, and advances in specific marketplace geared to the next generation of customer. A primary recommendation for near term implementation includes GSX leaders designing and executing a business succession plan. Additional recommendations include drafting a business continuity plan and recruiting future generations of clients via an active marketing, advertising, and social media program. Successes across all major GSX business units are gained through technology advancements in overall website enhancements and a more aggressive social media optimization strategy.

For research recommendations, I recommend future researchers explore strategies to engage the next generation of customer to garner long-term business success through a lens that incorporates both qualitative and quantitative research and procedures. This recommendation is based on a potential mixed methods future study using the Baldrige framework. A future research recommendation would be for a researcher to go beyond exploring the organizational leadership level to potentially surveying vendors, suppliers, and customers. Finally, I recommend future researchers incorporate a conceptual framework other than GST. Conceptual framework recommendations include single- and double-loop learning theory, resource-based view theory, or strategic management theory. I also recommend incorporating research data from more than one geographic location. The results of this study may benefit for-profit, family-owned and operated, small business leaders to strategically engage the next generation of customer ensuring sustainability for longer than 5 years.

References

- Abyad, A. (2016). Corporate governance for family-owned enterprises. *Middle East Journal of Business*, 11, 17-20. Retrieved from http://www.mejb.com/upgrade_flash/pdfs/MEJBOctober2016.pdf
- Adams, K. M., Hester, P. T., Bradley, J. M., Meyers, T. J., & Keating, C. B. (2014). Systems theory as the foundation for understanding systems. *Systems Engineering*, 17, 112-123. doi:10.1002/sys.21255
- Adams, P., Prakobtham, S., Limpattarachoen, C., Suebrakul, S., Vutikes, P., Khusmith, S., & Kaewkungwal, J. (2017). Ethical issues of informed consent in malaria research proposals submitted to a research ethics committee in Thailand: A retrospective document review. *BMC Medical Ethics*, 18, 1-19. doi:10.1186/s12910-017-0210-0
- Ajayi, A. (2016). Impact of external business environment on organisational performance of small and medium scale enterprises in Osun State, Nigeria. *Scholedge International Journal of Business Policy & Governance*, 3, 155-166. doi:10.19085/journal.sijbpg031002
- Aksoy, H. H. (2017). How do innovation culture, marketing innovation and product innovation affect the market performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)?. *Technology in Society*, 51, 133-141. doi:10.1016/j.techsoc.2017.08.005
- Alford, P., & Page, S. J. (2015). Marketing technology for adoption by small business. *Service Industries Journal*, 35, 655-669. doi:10.1080/02642069.2015.1062884

- Alonso-Almeida, M. M., Bagur-Femenias, L., Llach, J., & Perramon, J. (2018). Sustainability in small tourist businesses: The link between initiatives and performance. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 21, 1-20.
doi:10.1080/13683500.2015.1066764
- Amir, A. (2017). Exploring drivers and barriers to sustainability green business practices within small medium sized enterprises: Primary findings. *International Journal of Business & Economic Development*, 5, 41-48. Retrieved from <http://www.ijbed.org/index.php?view=previous/>
- Anderson, K. (2016). Resolving the cybersecurity workforce shortage. *ISSA Journal*, 14, 16-21. Retrieved from <http://www.issa.org/?page=ISSAJournal/>
- Anis, O., Maha Ayadi, F., & Mohamed Amine, B. (2015). An empirical investigation of factors affecting small business success. *Journal of Management Development*, 34, 1073-1093. doi:10.1108/JMD-07-2013-0088
- Anney, V. (2014). Ensuring the quality of the findings of qualitative research: Looking at trustworthiness criteria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 5, 272-281. Retrieved from <http://jeteraps.scholarlinkresearch.com/>
- Baek, H. Y., Cho, D. D., & Fazio, P. L. (2016). Family ownership, control and corporate capital structure: An examination of small capitalization public firms. *Journal of Family Business Management*, 6, 169-185.
doi:10.1108/JFBM-02-2015-0006

- Bailey, C. A. (2018). *A guide to qualitative field research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Bailey, L. (2014). The origin and success of qualitative research. *International Journal of Market Research*, 56, 167-181. doi:10.2501/ijmr-2014-013
- Baillie, L. (2015). Promoting and evaluating scientific rigour in qualitative research. *Nursing Standard*, 29, 36-42. doi:10.7748/ns.29.46.36.e8830
- Baker, J. D. (2017). Succession planning: A perioperative imperative. *AORN Journal*, 105, 538-540. doi:10.1016/j.aorn.2017.04.016
- Balan, S., & Rege, J. (2017). Mining for social media: Usage patterns of small businesses. *Business Systems Research*, 8, 43-50. doi:10.1515/bsrj-2017-0004
- Balteanu, C., & Marcu, M. (2015). The online advertising of small and medium sized businesses. *Annales Universitatis Apulensis-Series Oeconomica*, 17, 46-57.
Retrieved from
<http://oeconomica.uab.ro/index.php?p=papers&l=en&volumul=1920171/>
- Barkhatov, V., Pletnev, D., & Campa, A. (2016). Key success factors and barriers for small businesses: comparative analysis. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 22, 29-38. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.05.087
- Baumol, W. J. (2015). Joseph Schumpeter: The long run, and the short. *Journal of Evolutionary Economics*, 25, 37-43. doi:10.1007/s00191-013-0327-3
- Beachboard, M. R. (2017). Small business conformity with quality website design criteria in a marketing communication context. *Informing Science: The International*

- Journal of an Emerging Transdiscipline*, 20, 195-214. Retrieved from <http://www.informingscience.org/Publications/3852Aim/>
- Bennett, R. (2016). Factors contributing to the early failure of small new charity start-ups. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 23, 333-348. doi:10.1108/JSBED-11-2013-0173
- Beqiri, G. (2014). Innovative business models and crisis management. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 9, 361-368. doi:10.1016/S2212-5671(14)00037-9
- Berns, K. D., & Klarner, P. (2017). A review of the CEO succession literature and a future research program. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 31, 83-108. doi:10.5465/amp.2015.0183
- Beyene, K. T., Sheng, S. C., & We, W. W. (2016) Linking national culture and product innovation performance: What really influences the interplay, strategy formulation or implementation effectiveness? *International Journal of Business and Management*, 11, 184-196. doi:10.5539/ijbm.v11n2p184
- Biggart, T. B., & Harden, J. W. (2015). Small-business and self-employed medical plan issues: Recent IRS guidance. *Journal of Financial Service Professionals*, 69, 62-70. Retrieved from <http://national.societyoffsp.org/>
- Biros, M. (2018). Capacity, vulnerability, and informed consent for research. *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics*, 46, 72-78. doi:10.1177/1073110518766021
- Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., & Walter, F. (2016). Member checking. *Qualitative Health Research*, 26, 1802-1811. doi:10.1177/1049732316654870

- Blanco-Mazagatos, V., de Quevedo-Puente, E., & Delgado-Garcia, J. B. (2016). How agency conflict between family managers and family owners affects performance in wholly family-owned firms: A generational perspective. *Journal of Family Business Strategy*, 7, 167-177. doi:10.1016/j.jfbs.2016.07.003
- Blodgett, M. S., Eonas, A. G., Melconian, L. J., & Peterson, J. H. (2014). Enhancing business ethics or governance curriculum: Teaching nonprofit organizational ethics. *Journal of the Academy of Business Education*, 15, 18-37. Retrieved from <https://www.abeweb.org/>
- Bogers, M., Boyd, B., & Hollensen, S. (2015). Managing Turbulence: Business model development in a family-owned airline. *California Management Review*, 58, 41-64. doi:10.1525/cmr.2015.58.1.41
- Boitmane, I., & Blumberga, S. (2016). The development of medium-sized human resource marketing enterprises in Latvia. *Journal of Business Management*, 12, 124-132. Retrieved from <http://www.riseba.lv/index.php/en/research/publications/journal-business-management/>
- Bowen, D. H., & Mills, J. N. (2017). Changing the education workforce? The relationships among teacher quality, motivation, and performance pay. *Teachers College Record*, 119, 1-32. Retrieved from <http://www.tcrecord.org/library/Issue.asp?volyear=2017&number=4&volume=11>

- Brasoveanu, I. V., & Petronela, E. B. (2014). The influence of the business environment on small and medium enterprise. *Journal of Knowledge Management, Economics and Information Technology*, 4, 180-192. Retrieved from <http://www.scientificpapers.org/category/journal-issues/volume-4-2014/>
- Braun, C., Hadwich, K., & Bruhn, M. (2017). How do different types of customer engagement affect important relationship marketing outcomes? An empirical analysis. *Journal of Customer Behaviour*, 16, 111-144.
doi:10.1362/147539217X14909732699525
- Broekemier, G., Chau, N. N., & Seshadri, S. (2015). Social media practices among small business-to-business enterprises. *Small Business Institute Journal*, 11, 37-48. Retrieved from <https://www.sbij.org/index.php/SBIJ/issue/view/15/>
- Broks, A. A. (2016). Systems theory of systems thinking: general and particular within modern science and technology education. *Journal of Baltic Science Education*, 15, 408-410. Retrieved from <http://www.scientiasocialis.lt/jbse/view/biblio/year/2016/volume/15/issue/4>
- Burch, S., Andrachuk, M., Carey, D., Frantzeskaki, N., Schroeder, H., Mischkowski, N., & Loorbach, D. (2016). Governing and accelerating transformative entrepreneurship: Exploring the potential for small business innovation on urban sustainability transitions. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 2, 26-32. doi:10.1016/j.cosust.2017.04.002
- Burgess, S., Sellitto, C., Cox, C., Buultjens, J., & Bingley, S. (2017). An innovation diffusion approach to examining the adoption of social media by small

businesses: An Australian case study. *Pacific Asia Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, 9, 1-24. Retrieved from <http://aisel.aisnet.org/pajais/vol9/iss3/>

Cairney, P., & St Denny, E. (2015). Reviews of what is qualitative research and what is qualitative interviewing. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology: Theory & Practice*, 18, 117-125. doi:10.1080/13645579.2014.957434

Campbell, J. M., & Park, J. (2017). Extending the resource-based view: Effects of strategic orientation toward community on small business performance. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 34, 302-308. doi:10.1016/j.jretconser.2016.01.013

Carlson, J., Rahman, M., Voola, R., & De Vries, N. (2018). Customer engagement behaviours in social media: Capturing innovation opportunities. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 32, 83-94. doi:10.1108/JSM-02-2017-0059

Cavan, D. R. (2016). Analyzing retail store closures. *Appraisal Journal*, 84, 353-360. Retrieved from <https://www.appraisalinstitute.org/>

Caws, P. (2015). General systems theory: Its past and potential. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, 32, 514-521. doi:10.1002/sres.2353

Celec, R., & Globocnik, D. (2017). Benchmarking firm-level resources, capabilities, and postures driving export performance of SMEs. *Nase Gospodarstvo*, 63, 47-58. doi:10.1515/ngoe-2017-0005

- Chamberlain, R. P. (2016). Five steps toward recognizing and mitigating bias in the interview and hiring process. *Strategic HR Review, 15*, 199-203.
doi:10.1108/SHR-07-2016-0064
- Charlotte, B., Karin, H., & Johan, B. (2016). The use of purposeful sampling in a qualitative evidence synthesis: A worked example on sexual adjustment to a cancer trajectory. *BMC Medical Research Methodology, 16*, 1-12.
doi:10.1186/s12874-016-0114-6
- Chen, D., & Qi, S. (2016). The importance of legal form of organization on small corporation external financing. *Economic Inquiry, 54*, 1607-1620.
doi:10.1111/ecin.12330
- Chiang, C., Wei, C., Parker, K. R., & Davey, B. (2017). Exploring the drivers of customer engagement behaviours in social network brand communities: Towards a customer-learning model. *Journal of Marketing Management, 33*, 1443-1464.
doi:10.1080/0267257X.2017.1399922
- Choi, T., Rupasingha, A. A., Robertson, J. C., & Green Leigh, N. (2017). The effects of high growth on new business survival. *Review of Regional Studies, 47*, 1-23.
Retrieved from
<http://journal.srsa.org/ojs/index.php/RRS/issue/view/47%281%29/>
- Ciampi, F. (2015). Corporate governance characteristics and default prediction modeling for small enterprises. An empirical analysis of Italian firms. *Journal of Business Research, 68*, 1012-1025. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2014.10.003

- Coad, A. (2014). Death is not a success: Reflections on business exit. *International Small Business Journal*, 32, 721-732. doi:10.1177/0266242612475104
- Cole, H. S., DeNardin, T., & Clow, K. E. (2017). Small service businesses: Advertising attitudes and the use of digital and social media marketing. *Services Marketing Quarterly*, 38, 203-212. doi:10.1080/15332969.2017.1394026
- Colta, A. S., & Nagy, C. M. (2017). The contribution of accounting in customer relations management. *The Annals of Eftimie Murgu Resita University (UEMR), Economic Studies*, 24, 53-60. Retrieved from <http://www.analefseauem.ro/arhiva-revista/language-english/>
- Cridland, E. K., Jones, S. C., Caputi, P., & Magee, C. A. (2015). Qualitative research with families living with autism spectrum disorder: Recommendations for conducting semistructured interviews. *Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability*, 40, 78-91. doi:10.3109/13668250.2014.964191
- Cypress, B. S. (2017). Rigor or reliability and validity in qualitative research: Perspectives, strategies, reconceptualization, and recommendations. *Dimensions of Critical Care Nursing*, 36, 253-263. doi:10.1097/DCC.0000000000000253
- Darawsheh, W. (2014). Reflexivity in research: Promoting rigour, reliability and validity in qualitative research. *International Journal of Therapy & Rehabilitation*, 21, 560-568. Retrieved from <https://www.magonlinelibrary.com/loi/ijtr/>
- Devins, D., & Jones, B. (2016). Strategy for succession in family owned small businesses as a wicked problem to be tamed. *Budapest Management Review*, 47, 4-15. Retrieved from <http://cbs.uni-corvinus.hu/index.php?id=59885/>

- Dikko, M. (2016). Establishing construct validity and reliability: Pilot testing of a qualitative interview for research in Takaful (Islamic Insurance). *Qualitative Report, 21*, 521-528. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol21/iss3/>
- Doga-Mirzac, M. (2017). The promotion of young entrepreneurs for development small and medium business. *Valahian Journal of Economic Studies, 8*(2), 49-56.
doi:10.1515/vjes-2017-0018
- Donnelly, P., & Kirk, P. (2015). Use the PDSA model for effective change management. *Education for Primary Care, 26*, 279-281. Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/tepc20?open=26&year=2015&repetition=0#vol_26_2015/
- Douglas-Lenders, R. C., Holland, P. J., & Allen, B. (2017). Building a better workforce: A case study in management simulations and experiential learning in the construction industry. *Education & Training, 59*, 2-14.
doi:10.1108/ET-10-2015-0095
- Downey, B. (2015). The looking glass self and deliberation bias in qualitative interviews. *Sociological Spectrum, 35*, 534-551. doi:10.1080/02732173.2015.1064803
- Drouin, M., Stewart, J., & Van Gorder, K. (2015). Using methodological triangulation to examine the effectiveness of a mentoring program for online instructors. *Distance Education, 36*, 400-418. doi:10.1080/01587919.2015.1081735
- Duan, N., Bhaumik, D. K., Palinkas, L. A., & Hoagwood, K. (n.d). Optimal design and purposeful sampling: Complementary methodologies for implementation

- research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 42, 524-532. doi:10.1007/s10488-014-0596-7
- Durieux Zucco, F., Riscarolli, V., de Quadros, C. B., & Kock, N. (2017). Adopting advertising and communication innovations in small firms. *International Journal of Innovation*, 5, 199-210. doi:10.5585/iji.v5i2.156
- Efferin, S., & Hartono, M. S. (2015). Management control and leadership styles in family business. *Journal of Accounting & Organizational Change*, 11, 130-159. doi:10.1108/JAOC-08-2012-0074
- Ekanayake, A., & Kuruppuge, R. H. (2017). Governance of family owned businesses and firm performance: Evidence from Sri Lanka. *International Journal of Management, Accounting & Economics*, 4, 1020-1039. Retrieved from <http://www.ijmae.com/index.php?mod=journalman&act=16/>
- Emmel, N. (2015). Themes, variables, and the limits to calculating sample size in qualitative research: A response to Fugard and Potts. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology: Theory & Practice*, 18, 685-686. doi:10.1080/13645579.2015.1005457
- Fall, D. (2017). Disastrous tax consequences to avoid when liquidating an S corporation. *Florida Bar Journal*, 91, 44-48. Retrieved from <https://www.floridabar.org/news/tfb-journal/archives/>
- Franca, M. L., de Aragao Gomes, I. M., Machado, G. C., & Russo, S. L. (2014). Factors conditioning failure of micro and small businesses of the information technology and communication (ICT): Study of multiple cases, Aracaju (SE), Brazil.

- Business Management Dynamics*, 3, 40. Retrieved from <http://bmdynamics.com/page.php?name=Archive/>
- Francis, M. M., & Willard, M. (2016). Unlocking the potential of information and communication technology for business sustainability by small, micro and medium enterprises in Vhembe District, South Africa. *IADIS International Journal on Computer Science & Information Systems*, 11, 41-48. Retrieved from <http://www.iadisportal.org/ijcsis/>
- Francis, R. D. (2014). Assumptions and deeming. *Journal of Financial Crime*, 21, 204-214. doi:10.1108/JFC-07-2013-0049
- Fusch, P., & Ness, L. (2015). Are we there yet? Data saturation in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 20(9), 1408–1416. Retrieved from <http://tqr.nova.edu/>
- Gaya, H. J., & Smith, E. E. (2016). Developing a qualitative single case study in the strategic management realm: An appropriate research design? *International Journal of Business Management and Economic Research*, 7, 529-538. Retrieved from <http://www.ijbmer.com/docs/volumes/vol7issue2/ijbmer2016070201.pdf>
- Gelling, L. (2015). Qualitative research. *Nursing Standard*, 29, 43-47. doi:10.7748/ns.29.30.43.e9749
- Gerhardt, S., Hazen, S., & Lewis, S. (2014). Small business marketing strategy based on McDonald's. *ASBBS eJournal*, 10, 104-112. Retrieved from <http://www.asbbs.org/ejournal.html/>
- Ghee, W. Y., Ibrahim, M. D., & Abdul-Halim, H. (2015). Family business succession planning: Unleashing the key factors of business performance. *Asian Academy of*

Management Journal, 20, 103-126. Retrieved from

<http://web.usm.my/aamj/articles.html/>

Ghobakhloo, M., Hong, T. S., & Standing, C. (2015). B2B e-commerce success among small and medium-sized enterprises: A business network perspective. *Journal of Organizational and End User Computing*, 27, 1-32. Retrieved from

<https://www.igi-global.com/article/b2b-e-commerce-success-among-small-and-medium-sized-enterprises/121645/>

Goyal, E., & Srivastava, S. (2015). Study on customer engagement model-banking sector.

SIES Journal of Management, 11, 51-58. Retrieved from

http://www.siescoms.edu/journals/siescoms_journal.html/

Gray, D. E., & Saunders, M. K. (2016). Beyond survival: How do SMEs win new

business and prosper?. *Annual International Conference on Business Strategy & Organizational Behaviour (Bizstrategy)*, 11-15. doi:10.5176/2251-

1970_BizStrategy16.10

Halcomb, E., & Hickman, L. (2015). Mixed methods research. *Nursing Standard*, 29, 41-

47. doi:10.7748/ns.29.32.41.e8858

Hall III, C. W., Kugler, P., & Harris, D. W. (2017). S corporation corner: The IRS

announces it will no longer rule in three areas involving S corporations. *Journal of Passthrough Entities*, 20, 37-40. Retrieved from

<https://home.heinonline.org/titles/Law-Journal-Library/Journal-of-Passthrough-Entities/?letter=J/>

- Hanim Rusly, F., Yakimin Abdul Talib, Y., & Salleh, D. (2017). The impact of minimum pay implementation on small businesses operating cost and sustainability: A case of service business. *SHS Web of Conferences*, 34, 1-6.
doi:10.1051/shsconf/20173408006
- Harvey, L. (2015). Beyond member checking: A dialogic approach to the research interview. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 38, 23-38.
doi:10.1080/1743727X.2014.914487
- Hassan, S., Nadzim, S. A., & Shiratuddin, N. (2015). Strategic use of social media for small business based on the AIDA model. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 17, 262-269. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.01.363
- Henderson, H. (2018). Difficult questions of difficult questions: The role of the researcher and transcription styles. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 31, 143-157. doi:10.1080/09518398.2017.1379615
- Hetzl-Riggin, M. D. (2017). A study of the impact of informed consent procedures on participant responses in trauma-related research. *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, 22, 36-46. doi:10.1080/15325024.2016.1161430
- Hibbler-Britt, L., & Sussan, F. (2015). Small business success and social capital: A multicultural approach. *International Journal of Business & Finance Research*, 10, 156-163. Retrieved from <http://www.theibfr.com/journal.htm/>
- Hieronimi, A. (2013). Understanding systems science: A visual and integrative approach. *Systems Research & Behavioral Science*, 30, 580-595. doi:10.1002/Sres.2215

- Hirvonen, S., Laukkanen, T., & Salo, J. (2016). Does brand orientation help B2B SMEs in gaining business growth?. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing, 31*, 472-487. doi:10.1108/JBIM-11-2014-0217
- Hoerber, L., & Shaw, S. (2017). Contemporary qualitative research methods in sport management. *Sport Management Review, 20*, 4-7. doi:10.1016/j.smr.2016.11.005
- Hober, A., Weitlaner, W., & Pergler, E. (2016). Performance journey mapping: Insights from a methodological triangulation. *Journal of Information and Organizational Sciences, 40*, 45-65. Retrieved from <https://jios.foi.hr/index.php/jios/issue/view/65/>
- Honan, E. E. (2014). Disrupting the habit of interviewing. *Reconceptualizing Educational Research Methodology, 5*, 1-17. Retrieved from <https://journals.hioa.no/index.php/rerm/>
- Hopkins, J. P., Lipin, I., & Whitham, J. (2014). The importance of digital asset succession planning for small businesses. *Journal of Financial Planning, 27*, 54-62. Retrieved from <https://www.onefpa.org/journal/archives/Pages/default.aspx/>
- Islam, J. U., & Rahman, Z. (2016). Linking customer engagement to trust and word-of-mouth on Facebook brand communities: An empirical study. *Journal of Internet Commerce, 15*, 40-58. doi:10.1080/15332861.2015.1124008
- Johnson, C., Faught, S., & Long, J. (2017). Analyzing the needs of rural small businesses and developing economic sustainability programs for their management teams. *International Journal of The Academic Business World, 11*, 23-30. Retrieved from <http://jwpress.com/IJABW/IJABW-OnLineIssues.htm/>

- Jones, N., Borgman, R., & Ulusoy E. (2015). Impact of social media on small businesses. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 22, 611-632.
doi:10.1108/JSBED-09-2013-0133
- Joslin, R., & Muller, R. (2016). Identifying interesting project phenomena using philosophical and methodological triangulation. *International Journal of Project Management*, 34, 1043-1056. doi:10.1016/j.ijproman.2016.05.005
- Judit, O., Adam, S., Gyul, N. Y., Peter, L. y., & Jozsef, P. (2017). The impact of lean thinking on workforce motivation: A success factor at LEGO Manufacturing Ltd. *Journal of Competitiveness*, 9, 93-109. doi:10.7441/joc.2017.02.07
- Karatum, S. (2017). The place of digital marketing on Turkish small businesses. *Journal of International Trade, Logistics and Law*, 3, 36-43. Retrieved from <http://www.jital.org/index.php/jital/>
- Kavediya, S. (2017). Evolution of family owned businesses over three generations: A case study of Pune City. *Journal of Commerce & Management Thought*, 8, 209-218. doi:10.5958/0976-478X.2017.00011.8
- Khalifa, A. H., & Saad, M. (2017). The determinants of trust in the customer-service provider relationship: The case of Tunisian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). *International Journal of Technology Management & Sustainable Development*, 16, 295-310. doi:10.1386/tmsd.16.3.295_1
- Kinkaid, A. I., & Federanich, C. E. (2017). S corp. basis and why it's important. *Journal of Accountancy*, 224, 1-2. Retrieved from <https://www.journalofaccountancy.com/>

- Kirkland, S. D. (2015). Helping S corporations avoid unreasonable compensation audits. *Journal of Accountancy*, 219, 1-7. Retrieved from <https://www.journalofaccountancy.com/>
- Kitching, J., Hart, M., & Wilson, N. (2015). Burden or benefit? Regulation as a dynamic influence on small business performance. *International Small Business Journal*, 33, 130-147. doi:10.1177/0266242613493454
- Ko, W. W., & Liu, G. (2017). A typology of guanxi-based governance mechanisms for knowledge transfer in business networks of Chinese small and medium-sized enterprises. *Group & Organization Management*, 42, 548-590. doi:10.1177/1059601115627942
- Kopp, B. C., Crump, R. T., & Weis, E. (2017). The use of semistructured interviews to assess quality of life impacts for patients with uveal melanoma. *Canadian Journal of Ophthalmology*, 52, 181-185. doi:10.1016/j.jcjo.2016.10.005
- Kotus, J., & Rzeszewski, M. (2015). Methodological triangulation in movement pattern research. *Quaestiones Geographicae*, 34, 25-37. doi:10.1515/quageo-2015-0034
- Lamont, M., & Swidler, A. (2014). Methodological pluralism and the possibilities and limits of interviewing. *Qualitative Sociology*, 37, 153-171. doi:10.1007/s11133-014-9274-z
- Larraz, J. G., Gene, J. M., & Pulido, L. S. (2017). Productivity and value added distribution in family-owned businesses. *Intangible Capital*, 13, 4-24. doi:10.3926/ic.916

- Lazarus, L., Satyapal, K. S., & Sookrajh, R. (2017). Reflective journals: Unmasking student perceptions of anatomical education. *Folia Morphologica*, 76, 506-518.
doi:10.5603/FM.a2017.0019
- Lee, T. H., & Han, J. K. (2016). Global carriers' governance and business scope. *The Asian Journal of Shipping and Logistics*, 32, 173-178.
doi:10.1016/j.ajsl.2016.09.006
- Lekovic, B., & Maric, S. (2015). Measures of small business success/performance: Importance, reliability and usability. *Industrija*, 43, 7-26.
doi:10.5937/industrija43-7209
- Leonardi, P. M. (2015). Materializing strategy: The blurry line between strategy formulation and strategy implementation. *British Journal of Management*, 26, 17-21. doi:10.1111/1467-8551.12077
- Leonidou, L., Christodoulides, P., Kyrgidou, L., & Palihawadana, D. (2017). Internal drivers and performance consequences of small firm green business strategy: The moderating role of external forces. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 140(3), 585-606.
doi:10.1007/s10551-015-2670-9
- Leung, L. (2015). Validity, reliability, and generalizability in qualitative research. *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care*, 4, 324-327.
doi:10.4103/2249-4863.161306
- Lewis, P., Richard, A., & Corliss, M. (2014). Compliance costs of regulation for small business. *Journal of Business Systems, Governance & Ethics*, 9, 2-24. Retrieved from <http://jbsge.vu.edu.au/index.php/jbsge/issue/view/37/>

- Lewis, S. (2015). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches. *Health Promotion Practice, 16*, 473-478.
doi:10.1177/1524839915580941
- Li, Q., & Wang, X. (2017). A study on the influence of engagement marketing strategy on customer perceived support and willingness to customer engagement. IEEE 14th International Conference on e-Business Engineering (ICEBE), *e-Business Engineering*, 1-6. doi:10.1109/ICEBE.2017.33
- Lie, R., & Witteveen, L. (2017). Visual informed consent: Informed consent without forms. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology: Theory & Practice, 20*, 63-75. doi:10.1080/13645579.2015.1116835
- Lin, V. W., Lin, J., & Xiaoming, Z. (2016). U.S. social worker workforce report card: Forecasting nationwide shortages. *Social Work, 61*, 7-15. doi:10.1093/sw/swv047
- Lippmann, S., & Aldrich, H. E. (2016). A rolling stone gathers momentum: Generational units, collective memory, and entrepreneurship. *Academy of Management Review, 41*, 658-675. doi:10.5465/amr.2014.0139
- Luan, C., Chen, Y., Huang, H., & Wang, K. (2017). CEO succession decision in family businesses—A corporate governance perspective. *Asia Pacific Management Review, 30*, 1-7. doi:10.1016/j.apmr.2017.03.003
- Luckmann, P., & Feldmann, C. (2017). Success factors for business process improvement projects in small and medium sized enterprises—empirical evidence. *Procedia Computer Science, 12*, 439-445. doi:10.1016/j.procs.2017.11.059

- Luo, T., & Stark, P. B. (2015). Nine out of 10 restaurants fail? Check, please. *Significance*, 12, 25-29. doi:10.1111/j.1740-9713.2015.00813.x
- Luther, V., Hammersley, D., & Chekairi, A. (2014). Improving patient handover between teams using a business improvement model: PDSA cycle. *British Journal of Hospital Medicine*, 75, 44-47. Retrieved from <http://www.magonlinelibrary.com/doi/10.12968/hmed.2014.75.1.44/>
- MacGillavry, K., & Sinyan, P. (2016). Focusing on the critical link between employee engagement and customer centricity at DHL Freight. *Global Business & Organizational Excellence*, 35, 6-16. doi:10.1002/joe.21680
- Mahdavi, G., & Daryaei, A. A. (2017). Attitude toward business environment of auditing, corporate governance and balance between auditing and marketing. *Contaduría Y Administración*, 62, 1019-1040. doi:10.1016/j.cya.2017.04.005
- Mahlanze, H. T., & Sibiya, M. N. (2017). Perceptions of student nurses on the writing of reflective journals as a means for personal, professional and clinical learning development. *Health SA Gesondheid*, 22, 79-86. doi:10.1016/j.hsag.2016.05.005
- Maklan, S., Antonetti, P., & Whitty, S. (2017). A better way to manage customer experience: Lessons from The Royal Bank of Scotland. *California Management Review*, 59, 92-115. doi:10.1177/0008125617695285
- Manso, G. (2017). Creating incentives for innovation. *California Management Review*, 60, 18-32. doi:10.1177/0008125617725287
- Manurung, E. M. (2017). Coping with challenges creatively in distro industry for business sustainability. *Academy of Strategic Management Journal*, 16, 1-15.

Retrieved from <https://www.abacademies.org/journals/month-november-year-2017-vol-16-issue-2-journal-asmj-past-issue.html/>

- Marion, T. J., Eddleston, K. A., Friar, J. H., & Deeds, D. (2015). The evolution of inter-organizational relationships in emerging ventures: An ethnographic study within the new product development process. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 30, 167-184. doi:10.1016/j.jbusvent.2014.07.003
- Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. (2016). *Designing qualitative research* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mayo, A. (2015). Strategic workforce planning—a vital business activity. *Strategic HR Review*, 14, 174-181. doi:10.1108/SHR-08-2015-0063
- Mazzei, M. J., Flynn, C. B., & Haynie, J. J. (2016). Moving beyond initial success: Promoting innovation in small businesses through high-performance work practices. *Business Horizons*, 59, 51-60. doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2015.08.004
- McManners, P. J. (2016). Developing policy integrating sustainability: A case study into aviation. *Environmental Science & Policy*, 57, 86-92. doi:10.1016/j.envsci.2015.11.016
- Mellat-Parast, M., Golmohammadi, D., McFadden, K. L., & Miller, J. W. (2015). Linking business strategy to service failures and financial performance: Empirical evidence from the U.S. domestic airline industry. *Journal of Operations Management*, 38, 14-24. doi:10.1016/j.jom.2015.06.003

- Miller, D. M., & Clark, E. (2016). Promoting responsible harvesting by mitigating IUU fishing: A three-block and OODA construct?. *Australian Journal of Maritime & Ocean Affairs*, 8, 3-42. doi:10.1080/18366503.2016.1169625
- Miracle, V. A. (2016). The Belmont Report: The triple crown of research ethics. *Dimensions of Critical Care Nursing*, 35, 223-228.
doi:10.1097/DCC.0000000000000186
- Mogos, R. I. (2015). Digital marketing for identifying customers' preferences-A solution for SMEs in obtaining competitive advantages. *International Journal of Economic Practices & Theories*, 5, 240-247. Retrieved from
<http://www.ijept.org/index.php/ijept%20/issue/archive/>
- Mohd-Ramly, S., & Omar, N. A. (2017). Exploring the influence of store attributes on customer experience and customer engagement. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 45, 1138-1158. doi:10.1108/IJRDM-04-2016-0049
- Mokhber, M., Gi Gi, T., Abdul Rasid, S. Z., Vakilbashi, A., Mohd Zamil, N., & Woon Seng, Y. (2017). Succession planning and family business performance in SMEs. *Journal of Management Development*, 36, 330-347.
doi:10.1108/JMD-12-2015-0171
- Monelos, P. L., Sanchez, C. P., & Lopez, M. R. (2014). DEA as a business failure prediction tool application to the case of galician SMEs. *Contaduria Y Administracion*, 59, 65-96. doi:10.1016/S0186-1042(14)71255-0

- Mpinganjira, M. (2016). Influencing consumer engagement in online customer communities: The role of interactivity. *Acta Commercii, 16*, 1-10.
doi:10.4102/ac.v16i1.381
- Muskat, B., & Zehrer, A. (2017). A power perspective on knowledge transfer in internal succession of small family businesses. *Journal of Small Business & Entrepreneurship, 29*, 333-350. doi:10.1080/08276331.2017.1345208
- Nevius, A. (2017). Congress authorizes new small business HRAs. *Journal of Accountancy, 223*, 1-2. Retrieved from
<https://www.journalofaccountancy.com/issues>
- Nissan, J., & Eder, P. (2017). Four dimensions of designing succession plans. *OD Practitioner, 49*, 79-81. Retrieved from
<http://www.odnetwork.org/?page=ODPractitioner/>
- Nouicer, H., Zaim, I., & Abdallah, L. B. (2017). Explaining the impact of a customer-oriented strategy on the small and medium-sized enterprises' (SMEs) global performance: Lessons from the balanced scorecard and the CUSTOR scale model. *International Journal of Technology Management & Sustainable Development, 16*, 249-270. doi:10.1386/tmsd.16.3.249_1
- O'Brien, K. E., Minjock, R. M., Colarelli, S. M., & Yang, C. (2017). Kinship ties and employee theft perceptions in family-owned businesses. *European Management Journal, 30*, 1-10. doi:10.1016/j.emj.2017.06.006

- Odoom, R., Narteh, B., & Boateng, R. (2017). Branding in small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 20, 68-89. doi:10.1108/QMR-12-2015-0091
- Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Byers, V. T. (2014). An exemplar for combining the collection, analysis, and interpretation of verbal and nonverbal data in qualitative research. *International Journal of Education*, 6, 183-246. doi:10.5296/ije.v6i1.4399
- Oye, C., Sorensen, N. O., & Glasdam, S. (2016). Qualitative research ethics on the spot: Not only on the desktop. *Nursing Ethics*, 23, 455-464. doi:10.1177/0969733014567023
- Paliouras, K., & Siakas, K. V. (2017). Social customer relationship management: A case study. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Knowledge*, 5, 20-34. doi:10.1515/ijek-2017-0002
- Parnell, J. A., Long, Z., & Lester, D. (2015). Competitive strategy, capabilities and uncertainty in small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in China and the United States. *Management Decision*, 53, 402-431. doi:10.1108/MD-04-2014-0222
- Patidar, N., Gupta, S., Azbik, G., & Weech-Maldonado, R. (2016). Succession planning and financial performance: Does competition matter?. *Journal of Healthcare Management*, 61, 215-227. Retrieved from <https://journals.lww.com/jhmonline/toc/2016/05000/>
- Paucar-Caceres, A., Hart, D., Roma-Verges, J., & Sierra-Lozano, D. (2016). Applying soft systems methodology to the practice of managing family businesses in

Catalonia. *Systems Research & Behavioral Science*, 33, 312-323.

doi:10.1002/sres.2356

Pletnev, D., & Barkhatov, V. (2016). Business success of small and medium sized enterprises in Russia and social responsibility of managers. *Procedia-Social And Behavioral Sciences*, 22, 185-193. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.05.105

Plouffe, C. R., Bolander, W., Cote, J. A., & Hochstein, B. (2016). Does the customer matter most? Exploring strategic frontline employees' influence of customers, the internal business team, and external business partners. *Journal of Marketing*, 80, 106-123. doi:10.1509/jm.14.0192

Pryor, C., Webb, J. W., Ireland, R. D., & Ketchen, D. J. (2016). Toward an integration of the behavioral and cognitive influences on the entrepreneurship process. *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*, 10, 21-42. doi:10.1002/sej.1204

Pucher, P. H., Aggarwal, R., Singh, P., Tahir, M., & Darzi, A. (2015). Identifying quality markers and improvement measures for ward-based surgical care: A semistructured interview study. *The American Journal of Surgery*, 210, 211-218. doi:10.1016/j.amjsurg.2014.11.013

Pugna, A., Miclea, S., Negrea, R., & Potra, S. (2016). Small business owners undertaking organized marketing activities: Out of need or available resources?. *Procedia Computer Science*, 91, 306-313. doi:10.1016/j.procs.2016.07.083

Rahman, A. (2014). An analysis of entrepreneurial opportunities in Brazil: A critical review on business environment from economic, regulatory, and cultural

- perspectives. *Culture & Religion Review Journal*, 3, 129-147. Retrieved from www.franklinpublishing.net/
- Reardon, D. C. (2018). Will you be the one who leads the succession planning process?. *Journal of Financial Service Professionals*, 72, 17-19. Retrieved from <http://national.societyoffsp.org/page/jfsp/>
- Reilly, R. F. (2016). Distinguishing personal goodwill in family-owned company valuations. *American Journal of Family Law*, 30, 159-166. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/nlmcatalog/100972834/>
- Robinson, O. C. (2014). Sampling in interview-based qualitative research: A theoretical and practical guide. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 11, 25-41.
doi:10.1080/14780887.2013.801543
- Roth, L., Tissot, M. H., & Goncalves, R. B. (2017). Family-owned business succession and governance: A multiple case study in Brazil. *Revista de Ciencias da Administracao*, 19, 96-107. doi:10.5007/2175-8077.2017v19n48p96
- Rousseau, D. (2015). General Systems Theory: Its present and potential. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, 32, 522-533. doi:10.1002/sres.2354
- Runfola, A., Perna, A., Baraldi, E., & Gregori, G. L. (2016). The use of qualitative case studies in top business and management journals: A quantitative analysis of recent patterns. *European Management Journal*, 35, 116-127.
doi:10.1016/j.emj.2016.04.001
- Santos, R. E., Magalhaes, C. V., & da Silva, F. Q. (2017). Member checking in software engineering research: Lessons learned from an industrial case study. *ACM/IEEE*

International Symposium on Empirical Software Engineering and Measurement,
187-192. doi:10.1109/ESEM.2017.29

Sassen, S. (2016). Economic cleansing: Failure dressed in fine clothes. *Social Research*,
83, 673-687. Retrieved from
<https://www.socres.org/issues/category/Back%20Issues/>

Saunders, M. N. K., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2015). *Research methods for business students* (7th ed.). Essex, England: Pearson Education Limited.

Savage, T. N., & McIntosh, A. S. (2016). Tackling reliability and construct validity: The systematic development of a qualitative protocol for skill and incident analysis. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 35, 449-456. doi:10.1080/02640414.2016.1172722

Schaupp, L. C., & Belanger, F. (2014). The value of social media for small businesses. *Journal of Information Systems*, 28, 187-207. doi:10.2308/isys-50674

Scherger, V., Vigier, H. P., & Barbera-Marine, M. (2014). Finding business failure reasons through a fuzzy model of diagnosis. *Fuzzy Economic Review*, 19, 45-62. Retrieved from <http://www.sigef.net/2014-09-26-07-16-23/summaries-and-abstracts/itemlist/category/168-number-1-may-2014/>

Seaton, T. S., Waggoner, F. I., & Alexander, J. (2015). The role of hope in small business success: Beyond dreams and wishes. *Academy of Business Research Journal*, 3, 384-393. Retrieved from <https://www.aobronline.com/abrj/>

Shohei, H. (2016). Leveraging Torihiki-Jisseki through Japanese small- and medium-sized enterprises' overseas businesses. *Annals of Business Administrative Science*, 15, 211-220. doi:10.7880/abas.0160731a

- Sinha, A., Pandey, J., & Varkkey, B. (2017). Professionalizing religious family-owned organizations: An examination of human resource challenges. *South Asian Journal of Management*, 24, 7-24. Retrieved from <http://www.sajm-andisa.org/backissues/>
- Smith, O. (2015). How effectively succession planning affects the corporate strategy and effectiveness. *Scholedge International Journal of Business Policy & Governance*, 2, 1-5. Retrieved from <http://thescholedge.org/index.php/sijbpg/index/>
- Socha, B., & Majda-Kariozen, A. (2017). Financial performance in the light of corporate governance in Polish family businesses. *Folia Oeconomica Stetinensia*, 17, 56-70. doi:10.1515/fofi-2017-0018
- Stacchini, M., & Degasperri, P. (2015). Trust, family businesses and financial intermediation. *Journal of Corporate Finance*, 33, 293-316. doi:10.1016/j.jcorpfin.2015.01.006
- Talonpoika, A., Karri, T., Pirttila, M., & Monto, S. (2016). Defined strategies for financial working capital management. *International Journal of Managerial Finance*, 12(3), 277-294. doi:10.1108/IJMF-11-2014-0178
- Taneja, S., & Toombs, L. (2014). Putting a face on small businesses: visibility, viability, and sustainability the impact of social media on small business marketing. *Academy of Marketing Studies Journal*, 18, 249-260. Retrieved from <https://www.abacademies.org/journals/month-june-year-2014-vol-18-issue-1-journal-amsj-past-issue.html/>

- Thakur, R. (2016). Understanding customer engagement and loyalty: A case of mobile devices for shopping. *Journal of Retailing & Consumer Services*, 32, 151-163. doi:10.1016/j.jretconser.2016.06.004
- Thakur, R. (2018). Customer engagement and online reviews. *Journal of Retailing & Consumer Services*, 41, 48-59. doi:10.1016/j.jretconser.2017.11.002
- Toner, N. (2015). S corporation corner. *Journal of Passthrough Entities*, 18, 29-32. Retrieved from <https://home.heinonline.org/titles/Law-Journal-Library/Journal-of-Passthrough-Entities/?letter=J/>
- Toner, N. (2016). S corporation corner. *Journal of Passthrough Entities*, 19, 39-67. Retrieved from <https://home.heinonline.org/titles/Law-Journal-Library/Journal-of-Passthrough-Entities/?letter=J/>
- Toner, N. (2017a). S corporation corner early re-election of S corporation status under code Sec. 1362(g). *Journal of Passthrough Entities*, 20, 21-43. Retrieved from <https://home.heinonline.org/titles/Law-Journal-Library/Journal-of-Passthrough-Entities/?letter=J/>
- Toner, N. (2017b). S corporation corner: Mr. Hargis: The basis of his indebtedness. *Journal of Passthrough Entities*, 20, 23-26. Retrieved from <https://home.heinonline.org/titles/Law-Journal-Library/Journal-of-Passthrough-Entities/?letter=J/>
- Tran, V., Porcher, R., Ravaud, P., & Falissard, B. (2016). Point of data saturation was assessed using resampling methods in a survey with open-ended questions. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, 80, 88-96. doi:10.1016/j.jclinepi.2016.07.014

- Turner, S., & Endres, A. (2017). Strategies for enhancing small business owners' success rates. *International Journal of Applied Management & Technology*, 16, 34-49.
Retrieved from <http://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/ijamt/>
- Turner, S. F., Cardinal, L. B., & Burton, R. M. (2017). Research design for mixed methods. *Organizational Research Methods*, 20, 243-267.
doi:10.1177/1094428115610808
- U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016). *Entrepreneurship and the U.S. economy*.
Retrieved from <http://www.bls.gov/bdm/>
- U. S. Department of the Treasury. Internal Revenue Service (2018). *Election by a small business corporation form 2553*. Retrieved from
<https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/s-corporations/>
- U. S. Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy (2016). *Small business profiles for the states and territories*. Retrieved from www.sba.gov/advocacy
- Vagle, J. L. (2016). Tightening the OODA loop: Police militarization, race, and algorithmic surveillance. *Michigan Journal of Race & Law*, 22, 101-137.
Retrieved from <https://mjrl.org/past/>
- van Rijnsoever, F. J. (2017). (I can't get no) saturation: A simulation and guidelines for sample sizes in qualitative research. *Plos One*, 12(7), 1-17.
doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0181689
- Velly, A., Sunitarya, S., & Vinda, A. (2016). The effects of advertising strategies on consumer trust: A case of skin care products in Taiwan. *Binus Business Review*, 7, 125-130. doi:10.21512/bbr.v7i2.1585

- Vicary, S., Young, A., & Hicks, S. (2017). A reflective journal as learning process and contribution to quality and validity in interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Qualitative Social Work, 16*, 550-565. doi:10.1177/1473325016635244
- von Bertalanffy, L. (1950). The theory of open systems in physics and biology. *Science, 111*(2872), 23-29. doi:10.1126/science.111.2872.23
- von Bertalanffy, L. (1953). An outline of general systems theory. *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science, 1*, 134-165. doi:10.1093/bjps/I.2.134
- von Bertalanffy, L. (1968). *General systems theory: Foundations, development, applications*. George Braziller: New York, NY.
- von Bertalanffy, L. (1972). The history and status of general systems theory. *Academy of Management Journal, 15*, 407-426. doi:10.2307/255139
- Walden University (2017). *Center for Research Quality: Research Ethics & Compliance*. Retrieved from:
<http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/researchcenter/orec/application>
- Wang, L., Gopal, R., Shankar, R., & Pancras, J. (2015). On the brink: Predicting business failure with mobile location-based checkins. *Decision Support Systems, 76*, 3-13. doi:10.1016/j.dss.2015.04.010
- Wang, S., & Wang, H. (2016). A soft OR approach to fostering systems thinking: SODA maps plus joint analytical process. *Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education, 14*, 337-356. doi:10.1111/dsji.12103

- Warren, G. E., & Szostek, L. (2017). Small business strategies for sustainability beyond 10 years. *International Journal of Applied Management and Technology*, *16*, 111-122. doi:10.5590/IJAMT.2017.16.1.07
- Williams, D. A. (2014). Resources and failure of SMEs: Another look. *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship*, *9*, 1-15. doi:10.1142/S1084946714500071
- Wolf, L., Doane, E., & Thompson, S. (2015). Use of the PDSA model with the ERAS checklist...enhanced recovery after surgery. *Journal of Perianesthesia Nursing*, *30*, e26. doi:10.1016/j.jopan.2015.05.071
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Sage.
- Youssef, Y. A., Johnston, W. J., Abdel-Hamid, T. A., Dakrory, M. I., & Seddick, M. S. (2018). A customer engagement framework for a B2B context. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, *33*, 145-152. doi:10.1108/JBIM-11-2017-0286
- Zeuli, K., & O'Shea, K. (2017). Small business growth. *Economic Development Journal*, *16*, 15-21. Retrieved from <https://www.iedconline.org/web-pages/resources-publications/economic-development-journal-winter-2017/>
- Zhang, M. G., Hu, M. H., Guo, L. G., & Liu, W. L. (2017). Understanding relationships among customer experience, engagement, and word-of-mouth intention on online brand communities. *Internet Research*, *27*, 839-857. doi:10.1108/IntR-06-2016-0148
- Zhang, H., Liang, X., & Wang, S. (2016). Customer value anticipation, product innovativeness, and customer lifetime value: The moderating role of advertising

strategy. *Journal of Business Research*, 69, 3725-3730.

doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.09.018

Zondi, W. (2016). Governance of small business: The role of networking. *Risk Governance & Control: Financial Markets & Institutions*, 6, 20-27.

doi:10.22495/rcgv6i3c2art3

Appendix A: Interview Protocol

1. Introduce self to the participant.
2. Answer any initial interview questions or concerns that the participant may have.
3. Turn on the audio recording device.
4. Introduce participant with a pseudonym (Participant 1; Participant 2; Participant 3) and coded identification (PO1; PO2; PO3).
5. Note the current date and time.
6. Begin interview by reading the central research question:

What strategies do business leaders use to engage the next generation of customers to ensure sustainability beyond 5 years?
7. Next start with question number one and follow through to the final targeted interview question:
 - a. How do you determine which strategy or strategies to consider for sustaining your business by engaging future generations of customers?
 - b. How do you engage the next generation of customers to ensure sustainability for longer than 5 years?
 - c. How do you design and implement strategies to engage future generations of customers?
 - d. How do you use performance measures to evaluate the effectiveness of your strategies to engage the next generation of customers to ensure sustainability for longer than 5 years?

- e. Based on your experiences, what are the key issues that you have addressed that likely contributed to the ongoing sustainability of your business?
 - f. What additional elements, comments, or information do you wish to add regarding engaging the next generation of customers to ensure sustainability for longer than 5 years?
8. Time permitting, continue with targeted follow-up questions.
 9. Ensure to ask the targeted wrap-up question during the interview.
 10. End the interview sequence and thank the participant.
 11. Relay contact information for follow-up questions and any participant concerns.

Appendix B: Consulting Capstone 40-Week Project Timeline

Suggested 40-Week Project Timeline for DBA Specialization in Consulting			
Organizational Profile			
Term/ Week No.	Activity	Deliverable(s)	Key Performance Indicators/Measures
Term 1/ Wk 1	Contact client Identify and agree upon scope of project and deliverables Create, submit, and receive client's signature on Service Order (SO) Client provides orientation to org's culture, policies and protocols, and regulatory compliance requirements Complete Form A to receive the IRB approval number for this case study	Signed SO that aligns with DBA Research Agreement	List of client's needs, expectations, and requirements, including understanding of client's organizational culture, policies, and regulatory compliance requirements Affirmation of/agreement upon project scope, deliverables, and timeline Signed SO
Term 1/ Wk 2	Begin data- and information-gathering interviews and research (e.g., client's website, foundational documents)	Construct template for working draft of client's Organizational Profile (OP) and outline of key factors (KFs)	Template for documentation of evidence supporting students' identification of key factors that are of strategic importance to the organization
Term 1/ Wk 3	Continue gathering data/information through interviews with client's key leaders, managers, and stakeholders	Complete relevant sections of template	Draft of client's product offerings and services, business proposition, mission, vision, values (MVV), and core competencies, governance structure, relationship to parent organization
Term 1/ Wk 4	Gather data/information about client's workforce and customers	Complete relevant sections of template	Draft of client's workforce profile, including volunteers; table of relevant workforce demographics, requirements, and engagement factors
Term 1/ Wk 5	Gather data/information about client's key suppliers, partners, and collaborators	Complete relevant sections of template	Draft of client's key suppliers, partners, and collaborators, including key mechanisms for communication and key supply-chain requirements
Term 1/ Wk 6	Gather data/information about client's assets	Complete relevant sections of template	Draft of client's assets

Wk 6	client's assets, regulatory requirements, and key competitive changes	template	(facilities, technologies, equipment), regulatory requirements, including occupational health and safety regulations, accreditation, certification, industry standards, and/or product regulations
Term 1/ Wk 7	Gather data/information about client's strategic advantages and challenges, and performance improvement system	Complete relevant sections of template	Draft of client's key strategic challenges and advantages in areas of business, operations, societal responsibilities, and workforce; key elements of client's performance improvement system
Term 1/ Wk 8	Draft OP	Completed OP template	Working draft of OP
Process Chapters: Leadership Triad Component of Client Case Study (Leadership, Strategy, Customers)			
Term/ Week No.	Activity	Deliverable(s)	Key Performance Indicators/Measures
Term 2/ Wk 1 (Wk 9 of 40- wk plan)	Leadership 1.1: Gather evidence to describe and evaluate: How do senior leaders lead the organization?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do senior leaders set MVV? - How do leaders' actions demonstrate their commitment to legal and ethical behavior? - How do leaders communicate with and engage the entire workforce and key customers? - How do leaders create an environment for success now and in the future? - How do leaders create a focus on action that will achieve the organization's mission? 	Working draft of Leadership 1.1
Term 2/ Wk 2 (Wk 10 of 40- wk plan)	Leadership 1.2: Gather evidence to describe and evaluate: How do leaders govern the organization and fulfill societal responsibilities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does client organization ensure responsible governance? - How does client organization evaluate the performance of senior leaders and the governance board? - How does client organization address and anticipate legal, regulatory, and community 	Working draft of Leadership 1.2

		<p>concerns with its products and operations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does client organization promote and ensure ethical behavior in all interactions? - How does client organization consider societal well-being and benefit as part of its strategy and daily operations? - How does client organization actively support and strengthen its key communities? 	
<p>Term 2/ Wk 3</p> <p>(Wk 11 of 40- wk plan)</p>	<p>Strategy 2.1: Gather evidence to describe and evaluate: How does client organization develop strategy?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does client organization conduct strategic planning? - How does strategy development process stimulate and incorporate innovation? - How does client organization collect/analyze relevant data and develop information to support strategic planning? - How does client organization decide which key processes will be accomplished by its workforce and which by external suppliers and partners? What are client organization's key work systems? - What are client organization's vital few strategic objectives and timetable for achieving them? - How do strategic objectives achieve appropriate balance among varying/competing organizational needs? 	<p>Working draft of Strategy 2.1</p>
<p>Term 2/ Wk 4</p> <p>(Wk 12 of 40- wk plan)</p>	<p>Strategy 2.2: Gather evidence to describe and evaluate: How does client organization implement strategy?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are key short- and longer-term action plans? - How does client organization deploy action plans? - How does client organization ensure availability of financial and other resources (including HR) to achieve action plans while meeting current obligations? - What are key workforce plans to support short- and longer-term strategic objectives and action plans? 	<p>Working draft of Strategy 2.2</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What key performance measures or indicators does client organization use to track achievement/effectiveness of action plans? - For these key performance measures/indicators, what are client organization's performance projections for short- and longer-term planning horizons? - How does client organization establish/implement modified action plans if circumstances require a shift in plans and rapid execution of new plans? 	
Term 2/ Wk 5 (Wk 13 of 40- wk plan)	Customers 3.1: How does client organization obtain information from customers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does client organization listen to, interact with, and observe customers to obtain actionable information? - How does client organization listen to potential customers to obtain actionable information? - How does client organization determine customer satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and engagement? - How does client organization obtain information on customers' satisfaction relative to other organizations? 	Working draft of Customers 3.1
Term 2/ Wk 6 (Wk 14 of 40- wk plan)	Customers 3.2: How does client organization engage customers by serving their needs and building relationships?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does client organization determine product offerings? - How does client organization enable customers to seek information and support? - How does client organization determine customer groups and market segments? - How does client organization build and manage customer relationships? - How does client organization manage customer complaints? 	Working draft of Customers 3.2
Term 2/ Wk 7 (Wk 15 of 40- wk plan)	Analyze/Evaluate information for Leadership Triad (Leadership, Strategy, Customers)	Organize, analyze, validate, and confirm data and information for Leadership, Strategy, Customers	Working draft of Leadership Triad chapters of Client Case Study, including evidence-based feedback on client's strengths and opportunities for improvement (OFIs)

			Milestone 1
Term 2/ Wk 8 (Wk 16 of 40- wk plan)	Align and integrate data/information in OP and Leadership Triad (Process categories 1, 2, and 3)	Compile draft document of OP and all process chapters in Leadership Triad (Process categories 1, 2, and 3)	Complete working draft of process chapters of Leadership Triad (Process categories 1, 2, and 3), including evidence-based feedback on client's strengths and OFIs
Process Chapters: Initial Results Triad (Workforce, Operations) and Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management Components of Client Case Study			
Week No.	Activity	Deliverable(s)	Key Performance Indicators/Measures
Term 3/ Wk 1 (Wk 17 of 40- wk plan)	Workforce 5.1: How does client organization build an effective and supportive workforce environment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does client organization assess workforce capability and capacity needs? - How does client organization recruit, hire, place, and retain new workforce members? - How does client organization prepare its workforce for changing capability and capacity needs? - How does client organization manage its workforce? - How does client organization ensure workplace health, security, and accessibility for its workforce? - How does client organization support its workforce via services, benefits, and policies? 	Working draft of Workforce 5.1
Term 3/ Wk 2 (Wk 18 of 40- wk plan)	Workforce 5.2: How does client organization engage its workforce to achieve a high-performance work environment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does client organization foster a culture characterized by open communication, high performance, and an engaged workforce? - How does client organization determine key drivers of workforce engagement? - How does client organization assess workforce engagement? - How does client organization's workforce performance management system support high performance and workforce engagement? - How does client 	Working draft of Workforce 5.2

		<p>organization's learning and development system support the organization's needs and the personal development of its workforce members, managers, and leaders?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does client organization evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of its learning and development system? - How does client organization manage career progression for its workforce and future leaders? 	
<p>Term 3/ Wk 3</p> <p>(Wk 19 of 40- wk plan)</p>	<p>Operations 6.1: How does client organization design, manage, and improve its key products and work processes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does client organization determine key product and work process requirements? - What are the client organization's key work processes? - How does client organization design its products/processes to meet requirements? - How does client organization's day-to-day operation of work processes ensure that they meet process requirements? - How does client organization determine its key support processes? - How does client organization improve work processes to improve products and performance, enhance its core competencies, and reduce variability? - How does client organization manage its supply chain? - How does client organization pursue opportunities for innovation? 	<p>Working draft of Operations 6.1</p>
<p>Term 3/ Wk 4</p> <p>(Wk 20 of 40- wk plan)</p>	<p>Operations 6.2: How does client organization ensure effective management of operations?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does client organization control overall costs of operations? - How does client organization ensure the reliability of its information systems? - How does client organization ensure the security and cybersecurity of sensitive or privileged data and information? 	<p>Working draft of Operations 6.2</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does client organization provide a safe operating environment? - How does client organization ensure that it is prepared for disasters/emergencies? 	
Term 3/ Wk 5 (Wk 21 of 40- wk plan)	Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management 4.1: How does client organization measure, analyze, and then improve organizational performance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does client organization track data and information on daily operations and overall performance? - How does client organization select comparative data and information to support fact-based decision making? - How does client organization select voice-of-the-customer and market data and information? - How does client organization ensure that its performance measurement system can respond to rapid/unexpected organizational or external changes? - How does client organization review its performance and capabilities? - How does client organization project its future performance? - How does client organization use findings from performance reviews to develop priorities for continuous improvement and opportunities for innovation? 	Working draft of Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management 4.1
Term 3/ Wk 6 (Wk 22 of 40- wk plan)	Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management 4.2: How does client organization manage its information and organizational knowledge assets?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does client organization verify and ensure the quality of organizational data and information? - How does client organization ensure the availability of organizational data and information? - How does client organization build and manage organizational knowledge? - How does client organization share best practices in the organization? - How does client organization use its knowledge and resources to embed learning in 	Working draft of Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management 4.2

		the way it operates?	
Term 3/ Wk 7 (Wk 23 of 40- wk plan)	Analyze/Evaluate information for Initial Results triad (Workforce, Operations) and Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management	Organize, analyze, validate, and confirm data and information for Workforce; Operations; and Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management	Working draft of Initial Results Triad chapters of Client Case Study, including evidence-based feedback on client's strengths and OFIs
Term 3/ Wk 8 (Wk 24 of 40- wk plan)	Align and integrate data/information in OP, Leadership Triad, and Initial Results Triad chapters	Compile draft document of OP and all process chapters in Leadership and Initial Results Triad	Complete working draft of process chapters of Client Case Study, including evidence-based feedback on client's strengths and OFIs Milestone 2
Results Chapter: Collection, Analysis, and Preparation of Results			
Term/ Week No.	Activity	Deliverable(s)	Key Performance Indicators/Measures
Term 4/ Wk 1 (Wk 25 of 40- wk plan)	Results 7.1: What are client organization's product performance and process effectiveness results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are client organization's results for products and customer service processes? - What are client organization's process effectiveness/efficiency results? - What are client organization's safety and emergency preparedness results? - What are client organization's supply-chain management results? 	Working draft of analysis of results reported in 7.1
Term 4/ Wk 2 (Wk 26 of 40- wk plan)	Results 7.2: What are client organization's customer-focused results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are client organization's customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction results? - What are client organization's customer engagement results? 	Working draft of analysis of results reported in 7.2
Term 4/ Wk 3 (Wk 27 of 40- wk plan)	Results 7.3: What are client organization's workforce-focused results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are client organization's workforce capability/capacity results? - What are client organization's workforce climate results? - What are client organization's workforce engagement results? - What are client organization's workforce and leader development results? 	Working draft of analysis of results reported in 7.3

Term 4/ Wk 4 (Wk 28 of 40- wk plan)	Results 7.4: What are client organization's senior leadership and governance results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are client organization's results for senior leaders' communication/engagement with workforce and customers? - What are client organization's results for governance accountability? - What are client organization's legal and regulatory results? - What are client organization's results for ethical behavior? - What are client organization's results for societal well-being and support of its key communities? - What are client organization's results for achievement of its organizational strategy and action plans? 	Working draft of analysis of results reported in 7.4
Term 4/ Wk 5 (Wk 29 of 40- wk plan)	Results 7.5: What are client organization's results for financial viability?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are client organization's financial performance results? - What are client organization's marketplace performance results? 	Working draft of analysis of results reported in 7.5
Term 4/ Wk 6 (Wk 30 of 40- wk plan)	Compile and verify results for each Results section	Verify analysis of results levels, trends, and comparisons	Assemble and format Results chapter Milestone 3
Term 4/ Wk 7 (Wk 31 of 40- wk plan)	Assemble full draft of Client Case Study	Align and integrate data/information in all sections of Client Case Study	Full working draft of Client Case Study
Term 4/ Wk 8 (Wk 32 of 40- wk plan)			
Preparation and Review of Client Case Study			
Term/ Week	Activity	Deliverable(s)	Key Performance Indicators/Measures

No.			
Term 5/ Wk 1 (Wk 33 of 40- wk plan)	Review full draft of Client Case Study with mentor	Revise and refine full draft of Client Case Study	Full draft of Client Case Study to serve as checking copy for client leader's review
Term 5/ Wk 2 (Wk 34 of 40- wk plan)			
Term 5/ Wk 3 (Wk 35 of 40- wk plan)	Schedule client meetings to present full draft of Client Case Study	Revise and refine full draft of Client Case Study to reflect client's input about errors in fact and suggested edits	Full draft of Client Case Study that has been reviewed by client (and key stakeholders, if appropriate)
Term 5/ Wk 4 (Wk 36 of 40- wk plan)			
Term 5/ Wk 5 (Wk 37 of 40- wk plan)	Final review of penultimate draft of Client Case Study with mentor	Revise, refine, format, and prepare presentation copy of Client Case Study	Presentation copy of Client Case Study for delivery to client
Term 5/ Wk 6 (Wk 38 of 40- wk plan)			
Term 5/ Wk 6 (Wk 39 of 40- wk plan)	Prepare "scrubbed" edition of Client Case Study that is suitable for public presentation/publication	Remove/replace all proper nouns and other identifiers, remove all proprietary and confidential information from Client Case Study	Client's signed consent to publish redacted version of the case study
Term 5/ Wk 8 (Wk 40 of 40- wk plan)		Students must submit this final, publishable version of the case study to clients for review and approval at least 10 days prior to submission to Walden University for publication, presentation, or use. Students must receive written approval from the client prior to submitting this	Public copy of Client Case Study for presentation/publication

		version of the case study for publication. This is the ONLY version of the case study that may be submitted for publication.	
--	--	---	--

Appendix C: Client Service Orders

Service Order Agreement

Project Proposal

This Project Proposal has been drafted by John A Coy for [REDACTED] and is dated 20 September, 2017

This Service Order #1 aligns with the provisions of the DBA Research Agreement between Walden University and [REDACTED] dated 11 September, 2017

Scope of Work

Development and writing of the Organizational Profile (OP), as defined and estimated, below:

Work Phase	Estimated Time Required
Online interactions: Data collection to develop a working draft of OP (to include product offerings and services, business proposition, mission, vision, and values, and, core competencies, governance structure, workforce demographics, requirements, and engagement factors Week of 25 September – 60 minutes Week of 2 October – 60 minutes Week of 9 October – 60 minutes Week of 16 October – 60 minutes Week of 23 October – 60 minutes Flexible Schedule of one additional meeting – 60-120 minutes	Six 60-minute interview sessions at client organization agreed schedule/timeframe
Outcomes/Deliverables: Working draft of Organization Profile to be shared with Client Organization for approval.	N/A
Additional Services Provided if Requested: If client agreeable and schedule permitting, company leadership components may be gathered. Further support activities as requested by client organization as long as within scope of DBA Research Agreement	120 minutes
Total	6 planned sessions/360 minutes Flexible/60-120 minutes

Services Summary	Length of Engagement
Complete client-engaged research to produce a draft client Organizational Profile that is approved by the Client Organization.	20 September – 29 October, 2017

Terms of confidentiality and compliance:

In all reports (including drafts shared with peers and faculty members), the student is required to maintain confidentiality by removing names and key pieces of information that might disclose an Institution's/individual's identity or inappropriately divulge proprietary details. If the Institution itself wishes to publicize the findings of this project, that is the Institution's judgment call.

The student will publish the case study in ProQuest as a doctoral capstone (with site and participant identifiers withheld). The case study will be based upon interviews with non-vulnerable adults on the topic of the Institution's business operations, review of public records, and review of internal records/documents related to the Institution's operations that the Institution deems appropriate for sharing with the student.

The doctoral student will not use these data for any purpose other than the project outlined in this agreement.

Interview recordings and full transcripts will be shared with any interviewee (upon request), and the doctoral student will provide opportunities for clarifying previous statements. Transcripts with identifiers redacted may be shared with the doctoral student's university faculty, peer advisors, and site leadership (upon request).

The doctoral student is responsible for understanding and complying with all of the Institution's policies and regulatory requirements.

Ethical Conduct in this Consulting Relationship

The Code of Conduct in the Walden University 2016-2017 Student Handbook and the ethical requirements for IRB compliance described in the Manual for the DBA Consulting Capstone bind DBA students in the consulting capstone.

Also, DBA students are required to uphold professional principles in fulfilling their roles as consultants and coaches to client organizations. Beyond the confidentiality requirements outlined above, three principles are key to ensuring ethical conduct in consulting relationships.

Principle 1. Protect the integrity of Walden University.

- Not representing conflicting or competing interests or positioning themselves such that their interest may be in conflict or may be perceived to be in conflict with the purposes and values of Walden University.
- Not intentionally communicating false or misleading information that may compromise the integrity of Walden University and of the consulting capstone experience.

Principle 2. Exhibit professional conduct at all times.

- Respecting the climate, culture, values, and regulatory requirements of client organizations and client workforce members.

Principle 3. Protect the promise of confidentiality.

- Not using or adapting client organization's data and information after the capstone experience, unless the information has been publically shared by the client.
- Not conducting telephone conferences with the client organization in public places where information may be overheard.



The terms of this Project Proposal have been agreed to by John A Coy

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John A Coy".

SIGNATURE

Document date: 20 September, 2017

Service Order Agreement

Project Proposal

This Project Proposal has been drafted by John A Coy for [REDACTED] and is dated 20 September, 2017

This Service Order #2 aligns with the provisions of the DBA Research Agreement between Walden University and [REDACTED] dated 11 September 2017

Scope of Work

Development and writing of the Leadership Triad Component of Client Case Study, as defined and estimated, below

Work Phase	Estimated Time Required
Online interactions: Data collection to develop a working draft of the Baldrige Leadership Triad Component of Client Case Study Week of 30 November – 60 minutes Week of 6 November – 60 minutes Week of 13 November – 60 minutes Week of 20 November – 60 minutes Week of 27 November – 60 minutes Week of 4 December – 60 minutes Week of 11 December – 60 minutes Week of 18 December – 60 minutes Flexible Schedule of one additional meeting – 60-90 minutes	Eight 60-minute interview sessions and one flexible interview session at client organization agreed schedule timeframe
Outcomes/Deliverables: Working draft of Baldrige Leadership Triad Component of Client Case Study to be shared with Client Organization for approval	N/A
Additional Services Provided if Requested: If client agreeable and schedule permitting, company leadership components may be gathered. Further support activities as requested by client organization as long as within scope of DBA Research Agreement	Up to 120 minutes
Total	8 planned sessions/480 minutes Flexible 60-90 minutes

Services Summary	Length of Engagement
	30 October – 22 December, 2017

Complete client-engaged research to produce a draft client Organizational Profile that is approved by the Client Organization	
---	--

Terms of confidentiality and compliance:

In all reports (including drafts shared with peers and faculty members), the student is required to maintain confidentiality by removing names and key pieces of information that might disclose an Institution's/individual's identity or inappropriately divulge proprietary details. If the Institution itself wishes to publicize the findings of this project, that is the Institution's judgment call.

The student will publish the case study in ProQuest as a doctoral capstone (with site and participant identifiers withheld). The case study will be based upon interviews with non-vulnerable adults on the topic of the Institution's business operations, review of public records, and review of internal records/documents related to the Institution's operations that the Institution deems appropriate for sharing with the student.

The doctoral student will not use these data for any purpose other than the project outlined in this agreement.

Interview recordings and full transcripts will be shared with any interviewee (upon request), and the doctoral student will provide opportunities for clarifying previous statements. Transcripts with identifiers redacted may be shared with the doctoral student's university faculty, peer advisors, and site leadership (upon request).

The doctoral student is responsible for understanding and complying with all of the Institution's policies and regulatory requirements.

Ethical Conduct in this Consulting Relationship

The Code of Conduct in the Walden University 2016-2017 Student Handbook and the ethical requirements for IRB compliance described in the Manual for the DBA Consulting Capstone bind DBA students in the consulting capstone.

Also, DBA students are required to uphold professional principles in fulfilling their roles as consultants and coaches to client organizations. Beyond the confidentiality requirements outlined above, three principles are key to ensuring ethical conduct in consulting relationships.

Principle 1. Protect the integrity of Walden University

- Not representing conflicting or competing interests or positioning themselves such that their interest may be in conflict or may be perceived to be in conflict with the purposes and values of Walden University.
- Not intentionally communicating false or misleading information that may compromise the integrity of Walden University and of the consulting capstone experience.

Principle 2. Exhibit professional conduct at all times

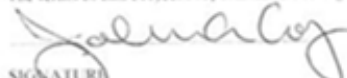
- Respecting the climate, culture, values, and regulatory requirements of client organizations and client workforce members.

Principle 3. Protect the promise of confidentiality

- Not using or adapting client organization's data and information after the capstone experience, unless the information has been publically shared by the client
- Not conducting telephone conferences with the client organization in public places where information may be overheard



The terms of this Project Proposal have been agreed to by John A. Co.


SIGNATURE

Document date: 31 October, 2017

Service Order Agreement

Project Proposal

This Project Proposal has been drafted by John A Coy for [REDACTED] and is dated 17 January, 2018.

This Service Order #3 aligns with the provisions of the DBA Research Agreement between Walden University and [REDACTED] dated 11 September 2017

Scope of Work

Development and writing of the: Initial Results Triad Component of Client Case Study, as defined and estimated, below.

Work Phase	Estimated Time Required
<p>Online interactions: Data collection to develop a working draft of the Baldrige Initial Results Triad Component of Client Case Study.</p> <p>Week of 8 January – 30 minutes Week of 15 January – 60 minutes Week of 22 January – 60 minutes Week of 29 January – 60 minutes Week of 5 February – 60 minutes Week of 12 February – 60 minutes Week of 19 February – 60 minutes Week of 26 February – 60 minutes Flexible Schedule of 1-2 additional meetings – 60-120 minutes</p>	<p>Eight 60-minute interview sessions and up to two flexible interview sessions at client organization agreed schedule/timeframe.</p>
<p>Outcomes/Deliverables: Working draft of Baldrige Initial Results Triad Component of Client Case Study to be shared with Client Organization for approval.</p>	N/A
<p>Additional Services Provided if Requested: If client agreeable and schedule permitting, additional company "Initial Results" components may be gathered. Further support activities as requested by client organization as long as within scope of DBA Research Agreement.</p>	Up to 120 minutes
<p>Total</p>	<p>8 planned sessions/480 minutes Flexible/60-120 minutes</p>
<p>Services Summary</p> <p>Complete client-engaged research to produce a draft client Initial Results Triad & Organizational Profile that is reviewed by the Client Organization during the engagement and to be approved with the final doctoral study.</p>	<p>Length of Engagement</p> <p>8 January – 4 March, 2018</p>

Terms of confidentiality and compliance:

In all reports (including drafts shared with peers and faculty members), the student is required to maintain confidentiality by removing names and key pieces of information that might disclose an Institution's/individual's identity or inappropriately divulge proprietary details. If the Institution itself wishes to publicize the findings of this project, that is the Institution's judgment call.

The student will publish the case study in ProQuest as a doctoral capstone (with site and participant identifiers withheld). The case study will be based upon interviews with non-vulnerable adults on the topic of the Institution's business operations, review of public records, and review of internal records/documents related to the Institution's operations that the Institution deems appropriate for sharing with the student.

The doctoral student will not use these data for any purpose other than the project outlined in this agreement.

Interview recordings and full transcripts will be shared with any interviewee (upon request), and the doctoral student will provide opportunities for clarifying previous statements. Transcripts with identifiers redacted may be shared with the doctoral student's university faculty, peer advisors, and site leadership (upon request).

The doctoral student is responsible for understanding and complying with all of the Institution's policies and regulatory requirements.

Ethical Conduct in this Consulting Relationship

The Code of Conduct in the Walden University 2016-2017 Student Handbook and the ethical requirements for IRB compliance described in the Manual for the DBA Consulting Capstone bind DBA students in the consulting capstone.

Also, DBA students are required to uphold professional principles in fulfilling their roles as consultants and coaches to client organizations. Beyond the confidentiality requirements outlined above, three principles are key to ensuring ethical conduct in consulting relationships.

Principle 1: Protect the integrity of Walden University

- Not representing conflicting or competing interests or positioning themselves such that their interest may be in conflict or may be perceived to be in conflict with the purposes and values of Walden University
- Not intentionally communicating false or misleading information that may compromise the integrity of Walden University and of the consulting capstone experience

Principle 2: Exhibit professional conduct at all times

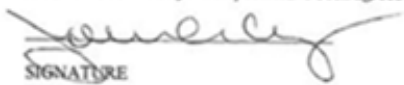
- Respecting the climate, culture, values, and regulatory requirements of client organizations and client workforce members

Principle 3: Protect the promise of confidentiality

- Not using or adapting client organization's data and information after the capstone experience, unless the information has been publically shared by the client
- Not conducting telephone conferences with the client organization in public places where information may be overheard



The terms of this Project Proposal have been agreed to by John A Coy:


SIGNATURE

Document date: 17 January, 2018

Service Order Agreement

Project Proposal

This Project Proposal has been drafted by John A. Coy for [REDACTED] and is dated 15 March, 2018.

This Service Order #4 aligns with the provisions of the DBA Research Agreement between Walden University and [REDACTED] dated 11 September 2017.

Scope of Work

Development and writing of the: Collection, Analysis, and Preparation of Results component of Client Case Study, as defined and estimated, below

Work Phase	Estimated Time Required
<p>Online interactions: Data collection to develop a working draft of the Baldrige Collection, Analysis, and Preparation of Results Component of Client Case Study.</p> <p>Week of 12 March – 60 minutes</p> <p>Week of 19 March – 60 minutes →</p> <p>Week of 26 March – 60 minutes</p> <p>Week of 2 April – 60 minutes →</p> <p>Week of 9 April – 60 minutes →</p> <p>Week of 16 April – 60 minutes</p> <p>Week of 23 April – 60 minutes</p> <p>Flexible Schedule of 1-2 additional meetings – 60-120 minutes</p>	<p>Seven 60-minute interview sessions and up to two flexible interview sessions at client organization agreed schedule/timeframe.</p>
<p>Outcomes/Deliverables: Working draft of Baldrige Collection, Analysis, and Preparation of Results Component of Client Case Study to be shared with Client Organization for approval.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Additional Services Provided if Requested: If client agreeable and schedule permitting, additional company Baldrige components may be gathered. Further support activities as requested by client organization as long as within scope of DBA Research Agreement.</p>	<p>Up to 120 minutes</p>
<p>Total</p>	<p>7 planned sessions/420 minutes</p> <p>Flexible/60-120 minutes</p>
<p>Services Summary</p> <p>Complete client-engaged research to produce a draft client Baldrige Collection, Analysis, and Preparation of Results component that is reviewed by the Client Organization during the engagement and to be approved with the final doctoral study.</p>	<p>Length of Engagement</p> <p>5 March – 27 April, 2018</p>

Ⓢ

Terms of confidentiality and compliance:

In all reports (including drafts shared with peers and faculty members), the student is required to maintain confidentiality by removing names and key pieces of information that might disclose an Institution's/individual's identity or inappropriately divulge proprietary details. If the Institution itself wishes to publicize the findings of this project, that is the Institution's judgment call.

The student will publish the case study in ProQuest as a doctoral capstone (with site and participant identifiers withheld). The case study will be based upon interviews with non-vulnerable adults on the topic of the Institution's business operations, review of public records, and review of internal records/documents related to the Institution's operations that the Institution deems appropriate for sharing with the student.

The doctoral student will not use these data for any purpose other than the project outlined in this agreement.

Interview recordings and full transcripts will be shared with any interviewee (upon request), and the doctoral student will provide opportunities for clarifying previous statements. Transcripts with identifiers redacted may be shared with the doctoral student's university faculty, peer advisors, and site leadership (upon request).

The doctoral student is responsible for understanding and complying with all of the Institution's policies and regulatory requirements.

Ethical Conduct in this Consulting Relationship

The Code of Conduct in the Walden University 2016-2017 Student Handbook and the ethical requirements for IRB compliance described in the Manual for the DBA Consulting Capstone bind DBA students in the consulting capstone.

Also, DBA students are required to uphold professional principles in fulfilling their roles as consultants and coaches to client organizations. Beyond the confidentiality requirements outlined above, three principles are key to ensuring ethical conduct in consulting relationships.

Principle 1: Protect the integrity of Walden University

- Not representing conflicting or competing interests or positioning themselves such that their interest may be in conflict or may be perceived to be in conflict with the purposes and values of Walden University.
- Not intentionally communicating false or misleading information that may compromise the integrity of Walden University and of the consulting capstone experience.

Principle 2: Exhibit professional conduct at all times

- Respecting the climate, culture, values, and regulatory requirements of client organizations and client workforce members.

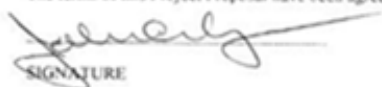
Principle 3: Protect the promise of confidentiality

- Not using or adapting client organization's data and information after the capstone experience, unless the information has been publically shared by the client.
- Not conducting telephone conferences with the client organization in public places where information may be overheard.





The terms of this Project Proposal have been agreed to by John A Coy


SIGNATURE

Document date: 15 March, 2018

Appendix D: DBA Research Agreement

WALDEN UNIVERSITY

DBA RESEARCH AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT (the "Agreement") is made and entered into on this 11th day of September 2017 by and between WALDEN UNIVERSITY, LLC, located at 100 Washington Avenue South, Suite 900, Minneapolis, MN 55401 ("Walden") and [REDACTED]

RECITALS

WHEREAS, Walden offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs and seeks to partner with institutions to allow Walden doctoral students (the "Students") to receive academic credit for work on research projects ("Research");

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual promises and covenants hereinafter set forth it is understood and agreed upon by the parties hereto, as follows:

I. TERM AND TERMINATION

This Agreement shall commence on the Effective Date and shall continue for a period of three (3) years (the "Initial Term"). Upon expiration of the Initial Term of this Agreement, this Agreement and the Term shall renew for successive one (1) year periods (each a "Renewal Term"). Notwithstanding the foregoing, either party may terminate this Agreement for any reason or no reason, upon ninety (90) calendar days' prior written notice to the other party. In the event of termination or expiration of this Agreement before a participating Student(s) has completed the Research, such Student(s) shall be permitted to complete the Research subject to the applicable terms of this Agreement, which shall survive for such Research until the date of completion.

II. RESEARCH

A. Institution and Walden may, from time-to-time, agree that selected Students, if accepted by Institution, may participate in Research with Institution. Walden shall be responsible for referring Students to the Institution and will instruct Students to provide Institution with a description of the Research. Walden agrees to refer to the Institution only those Students who have completed the required prerequisite course of study as determined by Walden. The parties anticipate that all Research will be done remotely and that Students will not be present at Institution's facilities.

B. Walden and Institution will conduct their activities hereunder in compliance with their respective policies and all applicable laws and regulations. In the event that any regulatory compliance issues arise, the parties will cooperate in good faith in any review conducted by the other party.

WALDEN UNIVERSITY

C. Where applicable, the Institution shall provide the Student with an orientation familiarizing student with all applicable State and Federal laws and regulations that pertain to the Research with the Institution, which may include those pertaining to Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information (the "Privacy Rule") issued under the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 ("HIPAA"), which govern the use and/or disclosure of individually identifiable health information.

D. The Institution reserves the right to dismiss at any time any Student whose health condition, conduct or performance is a detriment to the Student's ability to successfully complete the Research at the Institution or jeopardizes the health, safety or well-being of any patients, clients or employees of the Institution. The Institution shall promptly notify Walden of any problem or difficulty arising with a Student and a discussion shall be held either by telephone or in person to determine the appropriate course of action. The Institution will, however, have final responsibility and authority to dismiss any Student from Institution.

E. The Institution and Walden shall each maintain general liability insurance (or comparable coverage under a program of self-insurance) for itself and its employees with a single limit of no less than One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence and Two Million Dollars (\$2,000,000) annual aggregate. Each party shall provide the other party with proof of coverage upon request.

III. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

A. The Student shall agree to abide by the rules, regulations, policies and procedures of the Institution as provided to Student by the Institution during their orientation at the Institution and shall abide by the requirements of all applicable laws.

B. If applicable, the Student shall agree to comply with the Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information (the "Privacy Rule") issued under the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 ("HIPAA"), which govern the use and/or disclosure of individually identifiable health information.

C. The Student shall arrange for and provide to Institution any information requested by Institution including, but not limited to, criminal background checks, health information, verification of certification and/or licensure, insurance information and information relating to participation in federally funded insurance programs.

IV. MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

A. FERPA. For purposes of this Agreement, pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 ("FERPA"), the parties acknowledge and agree that the Institution has an educational interest in the educational records of the Student participating in the Program and to the extent that access to Student's records are required by the Institution in

WALDEN UNIVERSITY

order to carry out the Research. Institution and Walden shall only disclose such educational records in compliance with FERPA.

B. HIPAA. The parties agree that, if the Institution is a covered entity under HIPAA:

(1) Where a Student is participating in Research that will require access to Protected Health Information:

(a) Student shall be considered part of Institution's workforce for HIPAA compliance purposes in accordance with 45 CFR §160.103, but shall not otherwise be construed to be employees of Institution;

(b) Student shall receive training by the Institution on, and subject to compliance with, all of Institution's privacy policies adopted pursuant to HIPAA, and

(c) Student shall not disclose any Protected Health Information, as that term is defined by 45 CFR §164.105, to which a Student has access through program participation that has not first been de-identified as provided in 45 CFR §164.514(a);

(2) Walden will never access or request to access any Protected Health Information held or collected by or on behalf of the Institution that has not first been de-identified as provided in 45 CFR §164.514(a); and

(3) No services are being provided to the Institution by Walden pursuant to this Agreement and therefore this Agreement does not create a "business associate" relationship as that term is defined in 45 CFR §160.103.

C. Publications. Students and Walden are free to publish, present, or use any results arising out of the Research for their own academic, instructional, research, or publication purposes. Students shall submit a draft of any proposed publication to Institution at least ten (10) business days prior to submission for publication, presentation, or use. To the extent Institution requires that Students enter into nondisclosure or confidentiality agreements, such agreements shall be subject to this Section allowing publication of Research results.

D. Institution and Walden will promote a coordinated effort by evaluating the Research at mutually agreeable times, planning for its continuous improvement, making such changes as are deemed advisable and discussing problems as they arise concerning this affiliation.

E. The parties agree that Students are at all times acting as independent contractors and that Students are not and will not be considered employees of the Institution or any of its subsidiaries or affiliates by virtue of a Student's participation in the Research and shall not as a result of Student's participation in the Research, be entitled to compensation, remuneration or benefits of any kind.

WALDEN UNIVERSITY

F. Institution and Walden agree that Student will have equal access to their respective programs and facilities without regard for gender identity, race, color, sex, age, religion or creed, marital status, disability, national or ethnic origin, socioeconomic status, veteran status, sexual orientation or other legally protected status. Institution and Walden will comply with all applicable non-discrimination laws in providing services hereunder.

G. The terms and conditions of this Agreement may only be amended by written instrument executed by both parties.

H. This Agreement is nonexclusive. The Institution and Walden reserve the right to enter into similar agreements with other institutions.

I. This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Minnesota.

J. Any notice required hereunder shall be sent by certified or registered mail, return receipt requested and shall be deemed given upon deposit thereof in the U.S. mail (postage prepaid). Notices to Walden shall be sent to Jenny Sherer, Office of Research Ethics and Compliance, 100 Washington Avenue South, Suite 900, Minneapolis MN 55401 with a copy to: Walden University, LLC, Attention: Assistant Divisional Counsel, 650 South Exeter Street, Baltimore, MD 21202.

K. Each party agrees to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the other from all losses or liabilities resulting from the negligent acts or omissions of the indemnifying party and/or its employees or agents arising out of the performance or the terms and conditions of this Agreement, except to the extent such losses or liabilities are caused by the indemnified party's negligence or willful misconduct.

L. This Agreement sets forth the entire understanding of the parties hereto and supersedes any and all prior agreements, arrangements and understandings, oral or written, of any nature whatsoever, between the parties with respect to the subject matter hereof. This Agreement and any amendments hereto may be executed in counterparts and all such counterparts taken together shall be deemed to constitute one and the same instrument. The parties agree that delivery of an executed counterpart signature hereof by facsimile transmission, or in "portable document format" ("pdf") form, or by any other electronic means intended to preserve the original graphic and pictorial appearance of a document, will have the same effect as physical delivery of the paper document bearing the original signature.

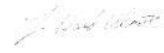
SIGNATURE PAGE FOLLOWS

WALDEN UNIVERSITY

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have duly executed this Agreement, effective the date first above written


WALDEN UNIVERSITY, LLC

INSTITUTION

By: 
(signature)

By: 
(signature)

Name: L. Ward Ulmer, Ph.D.
(Print name)

Name: 
(Print name)

Title: Vice President

Title: 

Date: 9-18-17

Date: 15 Sep 17