

Road Map to Success

Setting a framework of actionable steps

Exercise 3 is the last in a series of three exercises to help you build your ‘Artist Business Plan’ – an action plan to propel your professional artistic career forward. If you are starting this exercise, **congratulations!** it means you have already completed the following:

- ✓ **Exercise 1: Unique Artist Description** – *Knowing your business and what you want from your career*
- ✓ **Exercise 2: Time & Money** – *Understanding your most valuable resources*

Exercise 3: Road Map to Success – *Setting a framework of actionable steps*

A road map is a tool used to help one navigate the journey to a chosen destination. Webster also defines it as “*a detailed plan to guide progress toward a goal*”.

In the previous two exercises you identified your short-term and long-term goals. You should also have a better understanding of how your management of time and money affect your success at reaching those goals.

The final step to building your **Artist Business Plan** is setting a framework of action steps and milestones that move you closer to your goals, while staying true to your **Artist Mission Statement**.

Remember,

- **Goals** are like destinations—where you want your career and business to be.
- **Objectives** are the steps you take along the way to achieving those goals. Objectives are also used as a measurement of your progress.

You will plot your objectives on your road map by creating:

- **Milestones** – the crucial points along the journey that measure whether or not you are progressing toward your goal
- **Action Steps** – the details and actions that allow you to reach each milestone effectively

Objective: Outline the steps necessary for moving closer to your business goals.

After completing Exercise 3 you can expect the following outputs:

1. **A framework of action steps with deadlines to complete these actions**
2. **A set of milestones with deadlines to measure your business progress and success**

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Guidelines, p.1

Enjoy the journey. If reaching our artistic goals and dreams was as easy as moving directly from point A to point Z, wouldn't everyone do it? The reality is, working towards big goals and dreams and growing your business takes both time and flexibility. The first part of setting out on your journey is understanding that it will take time to build momentum. You will also have to accept that the road is never a direct path. There may be bumps and curves and unwanted surprises along the way. But, when you know where you are headed even the unexpected can be found enjoyable.

Example: *Let's begin by using this simple scenario of an American traveling from Chicago to Paris, France as an example of how to reach a destination or goal by setting milestones and action steps:*

1. **Your starting point** – the beginning of your journey is where you are right now (Chicago).
2. **Your goal** is your destination – Visit the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France.
3. **Milestones** – the crucial points along the journey that measure whether or not you are progressing toward your goal
4. **Action Steps** – the details and actions that allow you to reach each milestone effectively

Milestone 1 – Prepare for the journey

- **Action Steps:** schedule time available for travel, passport, plane ticket, pack bags, ask a friend to watch your cat, purchase and study Paris guidebook and French dictionary

Milestone 2 – Arrive on-time to the airport

- **Action Steps:** allow enough time to take L train to O'Hare

Milestone 3 – Check-in is smooth

- **Action Steps:** you have your ticket and passport, bags are not overweight, line moves at a decent pace, carry-on is within size limits, you pass through security with no delays

Milestone 4 – Plane departs on-time

- **Action Steps:** weather is good for flying, airline is on-time, passengers board on-time, runway is clear for take off

Milestone 5 – Plane lands safely and you arrive in Charles de Gaulle on-time

- **Action Steps:** weather is good for flying, airline is on-time, runway is clear for landing

Milestone 6 – You pass through customs with no problem and are admitted into Paris, France

- **Action Steps:** you have a valid passport and necessary visa, bags check-in fine

Milestone 7 – You are able to communicate with the taxi driver to get you to your hotel

- **Action Steps:** you know the address and name of the hotel, you practiced beforehand a few French phrases, you have the proper currency to pay

Milestone 8 – You arrive to the hotel no problem

- **Action Steps:** the taxi driver does not get lost, car has no troubles

Milestone 9 – You successfully read the Paris map and arrive at your destination

Success! You enjoy a nutella crepe at the foot of the Eiffel Tower.

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Guidelines, p.2

Expect the best, but don't be afraid to change. The traveling example seems pretty straight forward, but anything could go “wrong” that might change your plan. In the example of the Eiffel Tower, imagine what you might do if your cat got sick just hours before leaving. What if the L train had delays getting to O'Hare? What if you had trouble communicating with your taxi driver, and he took you to the wrong hotel? What if you could not read the map, the last step of your journey, to get you to your final destination?

Would you give up and forfeit your dream to see one of the world's most stunning attractions? Or would you face the challenges head on and continue moving forward?

Although these surprises may not have been in your original plan, surely, you would do everything you could to care for your cat and still board the plane on-time, get to your hotel in Paris although your driver had made a wrong turn, and find *La tour Eiffel* without the map.

The same goes for your Artist Business Plan. You may aspire to reach a certain level with your career or your business and have a brilliant plan with all the “right” steps to get you there. But, the truth is, sometimes life throws you a curveball, or the trends in your industry change, or you miss an opportunity that you planned for.

This is what your road map is for. When you stray from the original path, it helps you get back on the road toward your goal. If you see it takes longer to get to your destination, that's okay. Keep your eye on the goal.

Remember, if you know where you are headed, encountering the unexpected will not be the road block or hard stop that it is sometimes perceived to be. Instead, you can look at these surprises and challenges as opportunities and pauses for reflection in the journey towards your goal.

It is not all in your control. As you build your own framework of milestones and action steps take notice that some action steps are out of your control, but still necessary to move you forward. For example, the trip to the Eiffel Tower from Chicago couldn't happen without a pilot and a competent airline. The plane could not take off on-time without good weather conditions for flying. These steps are out of the traveler's control. You will find similar action steps in your own business plan. By accepting that you cannot control everything, you will increase your capacity to put more energy into the things that you *can* control.

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Guidelines, p.3

On the following pages you will find worksheets to assist you in developing your own framework of milestones and action steps. You can print them out and hang them next to your Unique Artist Description. Take a look. *Does your action plan stay true to the Artist Mission Statement you created for yourself?*

Each **Artist Business Plan** is a unique plan preparing the artist for his or her unique journey. As you prepare for and travel on this journey take into consideration these additional tips:

You can't change time, but you can manage it. In exercise 2 you learned about how you spend and manage your time. When building your plan of milestones and action steps setting a time frame is important. Deadlines will help hold you accountable for the goals you are setting out to achieve. Setting specific deadline dates may also help push you to complete the small steps that we sometimes take for granted. Time will always move forward. It is up to you to manage what you do with it.

Take time for reflection. As you begin to build momentum and you approach each of your milestones, allow yourself some time to pause and reflect. Milestones help gauge the progress and allow you time to evaluate and reassess your plans. Upon reaching each milestone you may ask yourself,

- *Is the path I have laid out working effectively?*
- *Am I "on schedule"? Am I working within the deadlines I set for myself and my business? If not, what changes do I need to make to allow for this shift in timing?*
- *What great things, or pleasant surprises, have happened while pursuing this goal, action step, or milestone? Have they changed my view of my goals?*

Remember, plans can change along the way so be sure to take time for reflection. If you need to reroute yourself, print out another worksheet and make the changes necessary.

It doesn't hurt to revisit exercises 1 & 2 from time to time to see if you are staying in touch with your industry and with your own beliefs.

As a creative professional you know better than anyone how to imagine and reimagine possibility. As an entrepreneur and CEO of your own small business it is your responsibility to ensure that your business grows and your work as an artist evolves. **Enjoy the journey!**

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Worksheet, Overview of Short-term & Long-term Goals

In the left column list each goal you have identified for your business and your professional artistic career. In the right column note if your goal is short-term (0-12 months, 1-2yrs.) or long-term (3-3 yrs., 5-10 yrs.) and by what date you expect to reach each goal.

Goals	Time Frame
<i>Short-term & Long-term</i>	<i>Expected deadlines</i>
i.e. List your goals - your "destination" <i>Where do you want your business to be?</i>	i.e. Short-term, 6 months - July 1, 2017 Long-term, 5 years - 2022
Goal:	

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Worksheet, A Short-term Goal (0-12 month, 1-2yrs.)

At the top, write down a short-term goal. In the left column list the milestones that mark your progress toward achieving this goal. In the right column create deadlines. You can print and complete a worksheet for each short-term goal you have. Add more milestones if needed.

Short-term Goal:

Time Frame

*Expected deadlines to reach Milestones.
The time to review and assess progress.*

Milestone 1:

Milestone 2:

Milestone 3:

Milestone 4:

Milestone 5:

Milestone 6:

Milestone 7:

Milestone 8:

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Worksheet, Milestone with Action Steps (Short-term Goal)

At the top, choose one milestone from your short-term goal and write it down. In the left column list the action steps to arrive to that milestone. In the right column create deadlines for completing each action step. You can print and complete a worksheet for each milestone of your short-term goal. Add more action steps if needed.

Short-term Goal:

Milestone # :

Time Frame

Expected deadlines

Action Step:

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Worksheet, A Long-term Goal (3-5 yrs., 5-10 yrs.)

At the top, write down a long-term goal. In the left column list the milestones that mark your progress toward achieving this goal. In the right column create deadlines. You can print and complete a worksheet for each long-term goal you have. Add more milestones if needed.

Long-term Goal:

Time Frame

*Expected deadlines to reach Milestones.
The time to review and assess progress.*

Milestone 1:

Milestone 2:

Milestone 3:

Milestone 4:

Milestone 5:

Milestone 6:

Milestone 7:

Milestone 8:

Road Map to Success

Worksheet, Milestone with Action Steps (Long-term Goal)

At the top, choose one milestone from your long-term goal and write it down. In the left column list the action steps to arrive to that milestone. In the right column create deadlines for completing each action step. You can print and complete a worksheet for each milestone of your long-term goal. Add more action steps if needed.

Long-term Goal:

Milestone # :

Time Frame

Expected deadlines

Action Step:

Artist Business Plan

Building a Road Map to Professional Career Success

Setting goals and actionable steps to grow your artistic business

Congratulations! You have just successfully completed developing your 'Artist Business Plan' by completing the following exercises:

- ✓ **Exercise 1: Unique Artist Description** – *Knowing your business and what you want from your career*
- ✓ **Exercise 2: Time & Money** – *Understanding your most valuable resources*
- ✓ **Exercise 3: Road Map to Success** – *Setting a framework of actionable steps*

Stay committed to your professional career success, and follow the next steps:

- **Revisit our website and our blog** for up-to-date information and new features filled with more business tips for professional artists
- **Engage in Arts Meet Bizness social media** on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Vimeo to find inspiring words, professional tips, new videos and links to relevant industry knowledge, and to meet other likeminded professionals

“Artist”. If you work in Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI), you are a part of the Creative Economy. **Artist as Entrepreneur**. If you have expectations of having a successful career as a professional artist, it's time to begin thinking of yourself as a small business. This doesn't mean changing who you are as an artist, and it doesn't mean becoming an expert in finance or marketing. What it does mean is taking responsibility for your career choices, and the creative decisions and actions that support (or do not support) your professional career as an artist. Remember, as an entrepreneur of a small business you, *and only you*, are the Artistic Director of your creative destiny.

“I Am. I Dream. I Do.”

Commit to the 'do'.