



Strategic Planning Case Study: Young Rembrandts

About the Company

Bette Fetter started Young Rembrandts (YR) in 1988, as a response to a need for supplemental art lessons for young elementary students. YR focuses on teaching children to draw, using a structured step-by-step method. Through the process of weekly instruction, students are exposed to a wide variety of subject matter, artistic concepts, art history and mastery of their materials.

YR has a passion to dramatically increase the abilities and therefore the number of children that participate in the arts. YR students receive a foundation in art literacy that invites them to continue an appreciation of the arts throughout their lifetime. YR provides services to 40,000 children per week through over 75 franchisees in the United States, Canada, South Korea and the Arab Middle East.

The Business Challenge

Young Rembrandts was started in the founder's kitchen, and continued to rely on the founder's intuition as it made major business decisions. YR staff was getting overwhelmed with too many disparate initiatives, all of them high priority, that did not lead towards a clear vision and goals. YR felt that in order to maintain control as it grew; it needed to improve business systems, develop management tools, and define clear metrics for success. Young Rembrandts hired [Skiba Consulting](#) (SCL) to develop a planning methodology and metrics to help them "grow up" as a company.

How Skiba Consulting Helped

Skiba Consulting decided that Young Rembrandts would benefit from an approach that allowed the company to quickly focus on key areas that might be good for both the company's bottom line and its social mission. SCL first led the YR management team through a SWOT analysis, reaching consensus on key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. We then used a powerful planning process (One Page Business Plan™) to create a business plan that focused YR on the critical path to long term success. The plan included a long term vision statement, specific and measurable objectives, strategies for achieving the vision and objectives, and projects that would "bend the curve" (make a significant difference.) Since 2008, YR has continued to use the process as a key tool for effectively managing the business and staying focused on efforts that generate the greatest results.

Results

- Formal planning and management leads to better focus and results
 - Shift from intuitive "seat of the pants" management to formal planning
 - Able to define concrete measurable goals, track progress, and overcome obstacles
 - Know what has been accomplished and whether YR is on the right path
 - Ability to share key management initiatives with other stakeholders such as franchisees
 - Workflow is defined more realistically and tied to clear objectives
 - Written plans minimize loose ends, limit what gets added, but retain flexibility
- Management Team more involved and accountable
 - More involvement in setting the agenda for the next year
 - Stronger ability to manage against key objectives and action plans
 - Intentional about meeting objectives and completing projects because expectations are clear
 - Managers "own their goals" and are accountable to themselves and the management team