

## The CORE FOUR Business Planning Course® Excerpts

### Excerpt 1:

#### Case Study: The Nightmare: Mike the Mechanic

*Note: Mike the Mechanic is completely fictional. Any resemblance to actual persons is purely coincidental. Mike is a composite of a number of small business owners.*

Mike worked as a mechanic for 15 years at a large automobile dealership in a small Midwestern town. The owner liked Mike and entrusted him with a great deal of authority. Everyone in town knew Mike. His work was high quality. He always made a quick diagnosis of the problem and made practical, reasonably priced repairs. He had a reputation for being able to figure out tough problems that other mechanics couldn't fix.

In his 15th year as an employee, the dealership changed hands. The new owners were people that Mike couldn't stand...they were bossy and ordered him around. They tried to force him to comply with repair standards and schedules, and wanted him to do and sell more services than customers needed.

After listening to Mike complain about his job, many of his customers suggested he should start his own business --- "You would have more work than you can handle." After about six months of gnashing his teeth, Mike decided it was time to cut loose and start his own service garage. Before quitting, he made sure to give a number of his customers his home phone number.

Mike had some acreage out in the country, about 11 miles from town. Using some savings and taking out a second mortgage on his property, he built a large pole building and purchased new equipment and tools. He painted a sign on a piece of plywood and hung it from his mailbox at the end of his gravel driveway. He placed a small ad in the local newspaper.

Nancy, a long-time customer of Mike's, had heard that Mike had started his own business. When she noticed her car wasn't running properly, she first looked on the internet to find his business but there was no listing. When she called the dealership to find Mike, they were rude and told her they didn't know anything about where he had gone. Nancy asked some neighbors and co-workers about Mike and finally found someone who knew his phone number.

When Nancy called the number, a child answered the phone and shouted for "DAAAAAD!" The child dropped the phone, and Nancy could hear the sounds of dogs barking, a baby crying, and a TV or radio. Some minutes later, a man's gruff voice said, "Yeah."

### Excerpt 2:

#### "When" Instead of "If"

*When* something goes wrong, not *if* something goes wrong, what will you do? How often have you had to readjust your plan, change your mind, or try something else?

In business, something *will* always go wrong. In our personal lives, something *will* always go wrong. We never know what or when, but we know it will.

Contingency planning ***prepares us*** to adjust, rethink, or change course in strategic ways. It helps us “keep our balance,” and “stay in step.” It eases distress and prevents us from being devastated or overcome with stress or loss.

**Excerpt 3:**  
**Have You Ever Prepared a Marketing Plan?**

If you’ve ever planned a party, then you’ve prepared a marketing plan.

When you have a party, you invite a certain group of guests (customers) to get together and have fun (the benefit)!

Your party follows a theme consistent with the nature of the event (industry).

You plan what to serve (product) and what decorations (packaging) you need.

You may provide entertainment or party games (services).

You decide where to hold the party (distribution/location).

You decide when to hold the party depending on what else is happening (competition).

You also send out invitations (promotion) and let people know what they should bring (pricing).