

The Buy or Build Question

Spring has arrived and with it the warmer brighter days. This is also the season of home and garden shows. Many of us can't wait to get outside and tackle our home improvement projects.

Maybe it's a new shed in the backyard? Maybe it's a jungle gym set-up for the younger folks. Perhaps you want to add a deck or replace an existing one for the older generation. All of these projects come with the same question: "Do I build it myself or have someone else do it for me?"

What has all this to do with business? Think for just a moment not about the specific project but the thought process you are use to answer the above question. You consider whether you have the skills; the time, and talent to do these things successfully. You need to apply this same thought process to making improvements in your business.

Do you want to reduce expenses by 5 – 10% over the next year? How about improving the quality of your product or service? Perhaps you want to expand your existing business or launch into a new sector entirely. All of these you may well be quite capable of doing with the resources already working for your company. However, the question is; at what cost?

It is not merely the matter of having the right competency. It is also about whether you can afford to use their time and energy to do these projects. Often leaders complain about not completing routine tasks are because of the need to apply resources to "special projects".

You may well find it more cost efficient to engage someone to support your business growth efforts.

A quick look through the BBoT Business Directory shows just how many folks are available to provide you specialized services for a specific period of time. It just makes good business sense to pay for only what you need when you need it.

The questions to ask:

- Is this activity/task tied to my basic business's focus or does it support that focus?
- Is this activity / task a core competency of my business?
- Are the resources (people/skills/availability) readily available in-house?
- What might not get done while my resources focus on this activity or project?

With the answer to these four basic questions you will be much better positioned to make the "Buy or Build" decision.

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