

# Chapter 4

## Phase I: Build a Solid Foundation

### What We Try to Accomplish This Phase

The first phase of creating a strong company is devoted to building a solid foundation. Business owners sometimes go awry by adventuring in more conceptual aspects of the business, such as partnering or distribution systems, while ignoring the foundational areas discussed in this chapter.

We start with Your Products and Customers are Defined. Sounds simple enough, and it is. But worth a read nonetheless because too many businesses don't do a good job with the last word in that phrase, "Defined".

Next, we move onto Your Mission Statements are Impressive. Most smaller businesses don't have mission statements, which is a mystery to me. In that chapter you'll not only hear why I think you should have them, but also how to construct good ones. If you're wondering why I use the plural for mission statements, it's because there are actually five types of mission statements. Whether you should have one of those five, all of them, or somewhere in between is something you'll determine in that chapter.

Finally, we'll come to Your Marketing Plan Excites Everyone. Do you have a Marketing Plan? Most smaller businesses don't. Instead, they take advantage of marketing and advertising opportunities as they come along. Sounds reasonable, but when we discuss marketing plans, you'll see how much is to be gained by having an annual or semi-annual planning process to create a *formal* Marketing Plan. I've italicized the word formal because the Marketing Plan is more than a document; it's a process.