

ONE MONTH BUSINESS CAMP



INTRODUCTION

The January Business Camp was launched in January 2015 and attracted over 1,000 translators from all over the world. In this intense time, we focused on business development and making the most of a quiet period. Following the success of this initiative, and indeed encouraged by some participants, I decided to turn the January Business Camp material into this One Month Business Camp ebook.

The One Month Business Camp is a self-paced programme for your business development with tasks and to-dos for every day in any month of a year. You can use the calendar on the next page to write your to-dos and plan the whole month. Of course, you can also do it at your own pace, or spread throughout the year.

While I won't be able to provide you with feedback on your assignments or tasks, I've set up a dedicated page on my website where you can post comments and ask questions to fellow One Month Business Camp participants. [You can access this page here](#) using password "businesscamp".

If you find the material useful, please do get in touch – it would be great to hear about your progress and success.

So, let's dive in!

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marta Stelmaszak BA (Hons.) MSc Chartered Linguists is a Polish-English translator and interpreter helping SMEs in Poland and the UK grow their businesses through better online communication. Marta runs the Business School for Translators recently turned into [an online course](#) and published [a book](#).



**ONE
MONTH
BUSINESS
CAMP
PLANNER**

SUNDAY						
SATURDAY						
FRIDAY						
THURSDAY						
WEDNESDAY						
TUESDAY						
MONDAY						

DAY 1

MAIN FOCUS FOR TODAY:

TASK 1: SUMMARY OF LAST YEAR, MONTH OR PREVIOUS PERIOD



Time for the task: 30 minutes

Take a sheet of A4 paper and divide it in two.

Use the upper part to write down **what worked last time (be it year, month, or previous business development period)**. Take a while to think about last time you worked on your business, those moments that you enjoyed in your business, things that worked out for you, good moves, wise choices. This list can include your achievements, new clients, exceeding income targets, you name it. Take the time to enjoy the good stuff that happened.

In the second part of this sheet, I'd like you to write down **what didn't work** – or doesn't work in your business. Believe me, when I started this section, I wrote down a ton of things! For example, I realised I wasn't happy with my budgeting, or I concluded that I definitely failed to manage my emails. I also came to a conclusion that I was travelling too much, and as a result, didn't have enough time for personal development. I suggest you write down everything you definitely disliked about previous year on the left hand-side of the sheet.

Use the right hand-side to write down **how you can change this**. Every single thing you didn't like in the previous year has a fix, a solution. Write down specific tasks or processes you need to implement or change.

TASK 2: MENTAL WHITE SPACE



Time for the task: 60—90 minutes

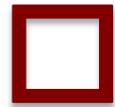
Now that we're done with previous year, I suggest you take a new sheet of paper and try to answer the following question: **what do I want to do in the next 12 months?** Write down anything that you want to do in your business, from changing the copy on your website, through taking a CPD course, to reading a book that will help you grow your business. Put all your ideas, to-dos, plans, things you want to try, experiments, learnings, things you always wanted to do but never had the time for – all in one place. This will

help you capture all of your business development ideas and write them down (don't commit your ideas to memory – you're unlikely to get anything done that way).

You'll see that once you write all ideas, thoughts and projects you're working on down, you'll experience a feeling of relief, or a mental white space if you like. You need it to be able to think clearly. You can also use this sheet of paper right throughout the One Month Business Camp and simply add points, ideas and plans to it.

Your final goal is to divide all plans and ideas into short-term (need doing in the next 2-3 weeks), mid-term (need doing in the next 3 months) and long-term tasks (need doing this year).

TASK 3: JOURNEY TO THE PAST



Time for the task: 15 minutes

We're taking it easy in Day 1, so I'm inviting you to do a bit of daydreaming and use the power of your imagination. Imagine yourself exactly in a year's time, looking back at the year that you've just had in the future. It was a great year, one of the most successful years in your career. Write down what exactly happened throughout this coming year that made it so good. This, of course, is going to be the foundation for your business plan.

This is how my mental white space looks like after about an hour of organising, cleaning up and getting rid of endless to-do lists. Zen.



DAY 2

MAIN FOCUS FOR TODAY:

TASK 1: THREE SIMPLE, MOST IMPORTANT QUESTIONS



Time for the task: 15 minutes

I don't know about you, but in my case, sometimes I struggle to find clear and achievable goals. We all seem to have similar ambitions: make more money, find direct clients, etc. But these goals work similar to your New Year's resolution to lose weight: they don't work. This is because there's no deadline, no vision and most importantly – no measure. What usually helps me is answering these three questions:

- ✓ *What is the one, single, most important thing you want to achieve in your business in the next 12 months? (reply in a sentence or two)*
- ✓ *How much more money do you want to make in the next 12 months in comparison to the previous year? (reply in numbers, of course being realistic)*
- ✓ *How many more clients do you want to find in the coming year? (reply in numbers)*

Write your responses down and put them somewhere visible. This is the foundation of your strategy for the coming year. Not too complicated, is it? This is exactly what a strategy is: the direction you're taking to achieve specific goals. You've got the goals, we'll work on the direction, and you'll have 11 months for execution (that is, implementing your strategy).

TASK 2: FINDING YOUR UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION



Time for the task: 15 minutes

The one piece of advice for freelancers you'll find everywhere is as follows: you need to find your USP, something that makes you different from others. But hey, how am I supposed to find something unique when I'm surrounded by other translators in my language pair?! What makes me unique if we're all striving to provide the best, highest-quality translation, therefore the least visible translation of all? I know these thoughts very well. I've been trying to hack this USP thing for years, and here's my take on it.

Try to complete the following sentences to your best knowledge.

- ✓ *All translation service providers (agencies and freelancers) offer translations that are...*
- ✓ *All freelance translators offer translations that are...*
- ✓ *Some translators offer translations that are...*
- ✓ *Few translators offer translations that are...*
- ✓ *My translation services are different because....*

I know that the last question is the most difficult one. When answering, think about the following aspects. What is that you're adding to the service you're delivering? What's individual about your work, style, business? What comes from your personality, education, experience in the translations that you provide?

TASK 3: RESEARCHING MARKET PLAYERS



Time for the task: 30—60 minutes

Now, I know that you don't have a full picture ready to work on this. Try researching other market players concentrating on finding out what you could be doing differently from them. Find 5 translation agencies and 5 freelance translators working in your combination NOT to look for their weak points or things you could be doing better, but to look for things you could be doing differently (in fancy terms: differentiation). Use an A4 sheet of paper to note down everything that comes to your mind and feed that back in to the sentences you were trying to finish.

And finally, in one sentence, write down your USP. It doesn't have to be perfect, you'll be honing it all the time, but it's there. A big hurdle out of your way.

Here it goes, my refined USP: I offer translation and content services between Polish and English in the field of online communication, combining my expertise in languages and management of innovation. If you want to grow your business in Poland using online marketing, or if you're a Polish online business expanding abroad, my language services will give you visibility, leads and maximum conversion.

DAY 3

MAIN FOCUS FOR TODAY:

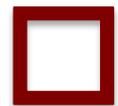
TASK 1: LOOK AT OTHER INDUSTRIES



Time for the task: 60—120 minutes

When I was doing my business training, I was surrounded by people from other industries, working in totally different fields. This experience gave me great insights into how others operate and I managed to bring some of these ideas into my own business. I think you'll benefit from it, too! Here's what I encourage you to do: find five companies from other industries (e.g. accountants, designers, consultants, or... some of your favourite clients) and look at how they do their business. What is the thing that they're doing that's absent in the translation industry? What are the little things that are missing? Which of them are worth implementing?

TASK 2: WHAT ARE YOUR STRENGTHS?

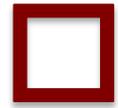


Time for the task: 60—90 minutes

I know that this question seems to be simple and a bit clichéd; you've probably tried and tested your strengths before. But I'd like you to take a different turn this time. Ask people around you what they see as your main strengths. This will help you discover what is the image you're presenting to the outside world and verify your own ideas about your strength, as well as it will guide you when comes to identifying which qualities to incorporate in your business. I know that this exercise feels a bit out of your comfort zone, but it's really great. So, here's what we're going to do.

- ✓ Create a [Google spreadsheet](#) for anonymous responses, or simply prepare the question to send it to people who know you. Ask about what others see as your three best qualities.
- ✓ Select between 10 to 25 people who know you fairly well (friends, colleagues, clients) and send this question to them. You can also take advantage of any family or friend meetings today and ask this in person or do a small focus group.
- ✓ Send these questions out.
- ✓ Collect responses, grouping most common qualities together.

TASK 3: WHY DO YOU DO WHAT YOU DO?



Time for the task: 45 minutes

One of the strongest points when comes to discovering your USP or the thing that makes you stand out is going back to the why of doing things. Start with watching this video:



Here's [a full article](#) where I collected many whys that you absolutely NEED to read.

Now that you're done with reading, **think about your why and write it down.**

So, right now you should be able to answer the following three questions:

- ✓ *The new thing I'm bringing to translation is:*
- ✓ *My main strengths are:*
- ✓ *My why is:*

How is that for making your services different? We'll keep working on it, but this is some nice progress, isn't it?

DAY 4

MAIN FOCUS FOR TODAY:

While you're still working on your USP and rediscovering your why, it's time we look at translation services from a new perspective. A very important thing I learned about business is as follows: every business, product or service exists to fix somebody else's problem.

Look at products that surround you right now. Why did you buy them? What problem are they fixing? I have a clothes roller on my desk (don't ask) and I know exactly why I bought it: my light brown winter scarf leaves fluff on my black winter coat. Oops, that's a problem. I also have a whiteboard because I used to be frustrated with too many lists with ideas or to-dos, so now I keep them all in one place. Things get a bit more complex when you think about why you got your accountant, for example.

Every business, service or product starts with a customer's problem. Have you ever thought about translation from this perspective? I haven't from the very beginning and it was only one of the courses I took some time ago that made me think like this.

So here's what we're going to do today. You can decide how much you want to do depending on your other commitments. You can concentrate on one area of specialisation only, and then expand this exercise into other areas later.

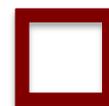
TASK 1: LIST YOUR SPECIALISATIONS



Time for the task: 15 minutes

Take a sheet of paper and write your specialisations down. It's generally advised to concentrate on a maximum three areas and I'm no different, so for me it's: law, business and marketing. Write them down and encircle.

TASK 2: FIND CLIENT SEGMENTS IN THESE SPECIALISATIONS



Time for the task: 30 minutes

A very important step in here is to find out who's actually buying your services. I wrote two articles about customer segmentation that I encourage you to read right now:

[Lesson 92: What's segmentation and does it go with selling translation?](#) and

[Lesson 93: How to segment your translation market?](#)

Try to find as many segments for each area of specialisation as you can; some brainstorming may be needed. You should be aiming at 3 to 5 segments. Here's what I came up with for my legal translation specialisation: Polish law firms, corporate legal departments, UK law firms, paralegal service providers. Add these segments to the sheet with your specialisations.

TASK 3: FIND YOUR CUSTOMERS' PROBLEMS



Time for the task: 60—90 minutes

Finally, and most importantly, find out what problems these customers have in relation to languages, the language barrier and linguistic differences. Start by brainstorming, but be careful – some serious research may be needed here*.

So, I started doing it for Polish law firms. I suggest you write these problems down in a form of quotes, things they might say:

- ✓ *“We’re often hiring young lawyers who speak English, but their language skills are not good enough for us”*
- ✓ *“There’s so much repetitive texts we need translating, it’s such a waste of time”*
- ✓ *“I wish we had somebody who actually knew the UK legal system and didn’t charge as much as a top lawyer”*

Do you see where I’m going with this? Add 3 real, painful problems each of your segments has. Do you know what to do with them next?

*If you haven’t done this type of research before, here are some quick tips to get you started. Assuming you want to research the problems that UK lawyers have when comes to language, start by 1) looking for information on lawyer blogs and on their Twitter accounts – what are their frustrations? Do they talk about them?; 2) Write to 5 people from this segment and ask if they have had any problems or if they can think of any; 3) Ask on 2 lawyer groups on LinkedIn; 4) Talk to an expert.

DAY 5

MAIN FOCUS FOR TODAY:

We started looking at your customers' problems yesterday and I know it needs a bit more research (at least it does for me!), so take your time today to explore and brainstorm further. Today's task fits in perfectly well with what we started working on yesterday, so you can safely work on both at the same time.

TASK 1: FINISH WORKING ON DISCOVERING YOUR CUSTOMERS' PROBLEMS



Time for the task: 15 minutes

Catch up on yesterday's task to have a clearer overview.

TASK 2: EVERY PROBLEM NEEDS A SOLUTION



Time for the task: 30 minutes

Transfer all segments and their problems you have identified into a neat table. Add the following headline to the next column: **“What kind of language-related product or service can fix this problem?”** and write down all fixes that come to your mind. The third column is easy: decide whether you can offer this particular fix through your services and if not, find somebody who does it (just to keep their contact details in case your clients or prospects ask).

Now, you're likely to come across fixes that you can already offer under your existing services. If that's the case, you've just sharpened your vision of your customer and gained a few strong lines to support your marketing efforts. What I suggest is that you keep these problems and fixes for later when we work on marketing.

You probably also came across fixes that you could be offering but you don't feel like doing that. That's where you need contact details to others who do provide that kind of service. It's called building your network.

It's likely that you're going to come across fixes you're not offering now but you could if you added them to your service portfolio. This is worth considering, as adding an extra service that taps right into your customers' needs can really help you differentiate. Have you discovered any services or offerings that you could introduce?

DAY 6

MAIN FOCUS FOR TODAY:

So far, we've been going into the details of what our customers want (if you haven't done your research yet, add it to your business ideas sheet for the coming year), how we can stand out and how to match their problems with our solutions. Today we're going to try to put everything together in our last day of strategy brainstorming. Make sure you catch up before tomorrow, as I'm going to show you how to prepare a simple strategy for your business. If you're a bit behind with tasks, use today to put all elements in place.

What I wanted to invite you to do today is one of my favourite strategy tools, included in the Blue Ocean Strategy (you can buy the book itself or find my application of the strategy to the translation industry in [my Guide](#)). The strategy is amazing and very comprehensive, but in here I'm just going to pull out some bits essential for us when planning our strategic direction for the next year.

TASK 1: INNOVATING VALUE



Time for the task: 60 minutes

Behind these big words lies a simple concept: coming up with a new way of doing things, a way that's different from how everybody else is doing it. You can do that by asking the following four questions:

- ✓ *What factors can be eliminated that the industry has taken for granted?*
- ✓ *What factors can be reduced well below the industry's standard?*
- ✓ *What factors can be raised well above the industry's standard?*
- ✓ *What factors can be created that the industry has never offered?*

I know that it will take some time to think about these points, but the results are amazing. You can read more about this in my article: [Lesson 68: Value innovation in translation: what can you offer that nobody else does?](#) Take a sheet of paper, write eliminate, reduce, raise and create in four opposite corners and start brainstorming.

TASK 1: BEING DIFFERENT ON THE MARKET



Time for the task: 60 minutes

This was just a warm-up. What I really want you to do is to put your strategist hat on and work on your strategy canvas.

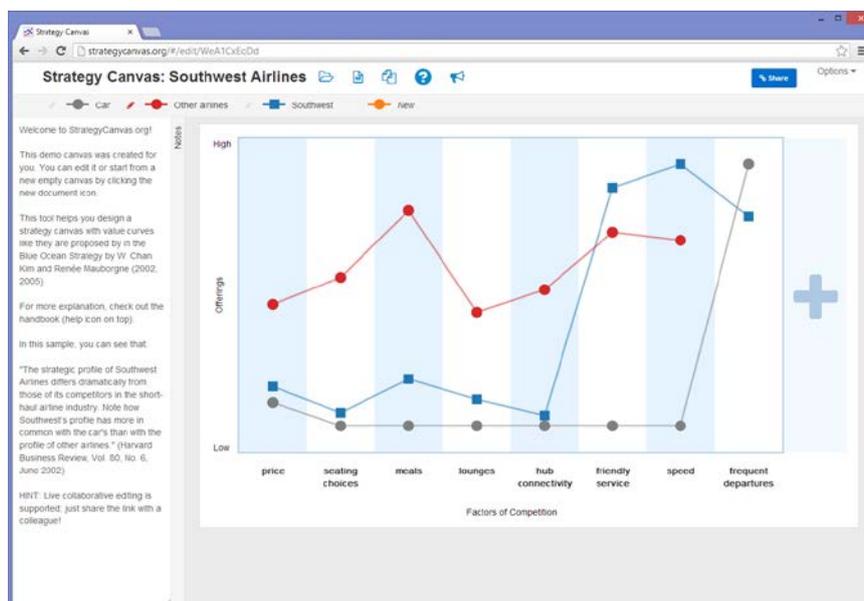
First, read this article: [Lesson 69: Translator's strategy canvas: providing value by being different](#). Don't go any further before you read this article.

Now that you know what I'm talking about, here's what I want you to do. Draw a canvas for your language/area of specialisation. At this stage, you'll find that the biggest challenge lies in coming up with "categories" to put on the horizontal axis. Once you get all elements, place the average of the market on the canvas.

Then, draw a line for your existing business. Are you much different from the general pool of businesses, or are you pretty much the same? When I was first starting with this tool, I found that the most of my business was exactly in the same place as other market players. The Blue Ocean Strategy will tell you that this is not a good thing at all.

This is why the final element of this task is to draw the "target" position for your business: where do you need to be to make your business different from competitors'? This is your strategy for the next year.

This is really the most comprehensive and straight-forward strategy tool out there. If you want your business to have a nice shape in the coming year, spend some time on it. It shouldn't take you more than 1 hour.



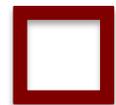
DAY 7

MAIN FOCUS FOR TODAY:

It's been a week now that we're working on our business development and it's time we put our strategies together. Over the past six days, I asked you to think and analyse a lot, all that to be able to create a solid strategic foundation for your business in the coming year.

It's going to be very interesting for me as well, because it's my first time using one of the strategy tools I'm going to introduce. I only got to know it in the course of last year and I was eager to put it in place. But let's start with what we know already.

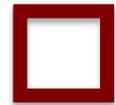
TASK 1: STRATEGY CANVAS



Time for the task: 15 minutes

Yesterday I suggested we work on our strategy canvasses and look for things that we could be doing differently from other market players. This is a very good way to brainstorm differentiation and get some ideas about standing out. It's a sketchbook, if you like. If you haven't drawn your strategy canvas yet, go back to day 6 and work on it.

TASK 2: STRATEGIC QUESTIONS



Time for the task: 30 minutes

What I've been doing every year for a while now is answering the following strategic questions.

- ✓ **Direction:** *Where are you trying to get to in the longer term with your business? What are your business goals for the coming year?*
- ✓ **Scope:** *Which part of the market should you concentrate on, and which activities are involved?*
- ✓ **Advantage:** *What skills or resources can you use to offer a better service to clients in this segment?*
- ✓ **Resources:** *What resources do you need to move in this direction?*
- ✓ **Environment:** *What external factors affect your business?*
- ✓ **Stakeholders:** *What are the values and expectations of groups that have an impact on your business?*

I suggest you copy these questions and paste them in a new document, leaving some spaces in-between, and print it. Fill it in answering to each question with one or two sentences (or bullet points). Remember that direction comes first and all following questions should be guided by your indicated business goals. This is your strategy for the coming year. Put it somewhere visible.

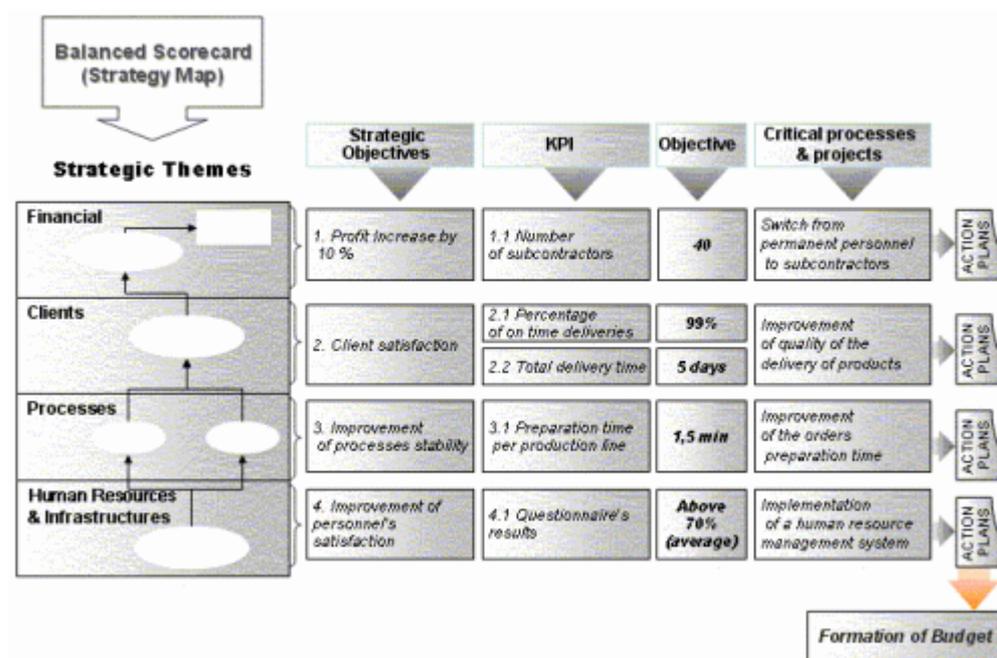
TASK 3: BALANCED SCORECARD



Time for the task: 30 minutes

A new tool for me this year, balanced scorecard has long traditions in business and management. It's a semi-structured strategy tool that helps you set goals and measure performance. Isn't this exactly what we've been missing?

Here's how it looks like in practice for another business (I took this image off the internet).



Now, the idea is to create four strategic categories: finance, customers, process and learning. In each category, you need to set your objective (e.g. in finance, increase yearly income), measure (e.g. increase in number of customers), target (e.g. 10 new customers in the coming year), initiatives (that's a more detailed action plan).

I think it's a brilliant tool to set goals and track performance! I'm explaining it a bit more in detail in [my book](#), if you're interested, and there are plenty of resources available if you search for "balanced scorecard" online.

DAY 8

MAIN FOCUS FOR TODAY:

You've probably realised that there's a lot of stuff that needs doing in the next 12 months. Feels a bit overwhelming? It does to me. Every year, I come up with so many ideas to implement in my business, so many things to do, that the beginning of the year is always a bit chaotic and all over the place. But this period is needed to get creative and make ideas flow. Of course, it can't stay like that for the whole year. Let's give it some order.

Every now and then I get asked how come I can squeeze so much into a day, or I even get accused of having two or three clones. The good news is: no, it's not any superpower, it's all down to simple planning. I want to share my big secret to getting things done with you now. This is perhaps the most powerful tool I'll share in this One Month Business Camp, so please read carefully.

TASK 1: DO YOU REMEMBER YOUR MENTAL WHITE SPACE FROM DAY 1?



Time for the task: 15 minutes

In day 1, I asked you to write all your ideas and projects down on a single sheet of paper. In the past days, you're likely to have grown this list significantly. Take a few more minutes to think about all the projects you want to get done next year.

Now, the difficult moment. Cross out these projects that aren't really important for your business, don't excite you or are not going to make you money (directly or indirectly). Be realistic about what you can do in the coming year. I, sadly, had to cut out some 5 projects I won't do this year, but who knows about the next...

TASK 2: NEXT 12 MONTHS



Time for the task: 30 minutes

Here's the first we're going to do with our projects. Take a piece of paper or a flipchart and divide it into 12 squares. Write the names of the months at the top of each square. Yes, this is it. Now write down everything that needs to happen in each month of the year: every event, every new client search, every new website, newsletter, any idea you came up with and is important in the coming year, place it in the calendar (it's a good

idea to go back to yesterday's strategy exercise to make sure you have all the projects you need in place to implement your strategy).

I always work on some rough paper first to get an overview of the next year and then I transfer the whole calendar onto one, fresh sheet of paper. This 12 month calendar is one of the most important things you'll ever create for your business: this is how you move from one place to another in your business. This is how you reach your goals, make your dreams come true, call it whatever you like. That's how I made it and I believe it really works.

TASK 3: THE MASTERPLAN



Time for the task: 30—60 minutes

But of course, this was just the first step. What we need to do now is to start brainstorming all these little things that need to happen in every project from the beginning to the end. I usually take extra sheets of paper and just write down every step that needs taking to finish every project.

Now, after you've listed all of this down, I want you to create a simple Excel spreadsheet (or a Word table if you prefer) with three simple columns: category, project, month (if you work with a team, add another column for: responsible). Below you can see a real screenshot of my masterplan for the Business School for Translators (BSfT) project: the next BSfT course.

Category	Project	Responsible	Deadline:
	BSfT Course April		01-Apr
Materials	Revise materials	Marta	
Materials	Introductory document	Marta	
Materials	First assignment	Marta	
Materials	Create folders and mailing group on Gmail	Karolina	
Materials	Our group document	Marta	
Materials	Run the course	Marta	
Promotion	New website copy and eCPD copy	Marta	
Promotion	New promotional videos, prezi and Slideshare	Marta	
Promotion	Prepare more case studies	Marta	

Add every little thing that needs doing in every project to this masterplan. It's great because you can always expand it and add new tasks and new ideas as you progress through the year. The beauty of it: you have everything written down, every single step that you need to take in the coming year to take you to wherever you are. The feeling of being overwhelmed is going away.

TASK 4: GETTING THINGS DONE... WEEKLY



Time for the task: 15 minutes

Now, here's what I'm doing by the end of the week. I review my masterplan and pull out all these tasks that I need to do next week in order to push my business forward. I copy them from the masterplan and transfer them onto a new sheet in the spreadsheet called 'This week'. I copy them there, adding a specific day deadline. Below you'll see how it looked like for me this week.

0	BSFT Blog				
1	Materials	Wednesday	Create new editorial calendar	Marta	x
2	Materials	Thursday	January: Post 1 - experts - how to find your niche + add clicktotweet	Marta	
3	Materials	Wednesday	Create WW TV editorial calendar	Marta	x
4	Promotion	Wednesday	Create blog promotion checklist	Marta	x

TASK 5: FINDING THE TIME TO GET THINGS DONE



Time for the task: 60—120 minutes

Ok, plans are great, but we actually need to work on things. Here's what I always do: I block 2 hours a day in my calendar (I work on many extra projects, such as this Camp or my blog, so you may need maybe 1 hour max) when I work on tasks from my masterplan.

Every day, throughout the whole year. And you know what? By the end of the year, I'm exactly where I wanted to be when I was planning it. This is, ladies and gentlemen, how we'll get things done in the coming year.

DAY 9

MAIN FOCUS FOR TODAY:

Are you getting pretty busy with work assignments and life just gets in-between? This is usually what happens to our resolutions, plans and goals. All of a sudden we just have no time for any of this.

This may be happening to you and the One Month Business Camp. You started right, you were motivated and could see that it was helping you, but today, by day 9, you're behind and you're not liking it. This is why today we're going to catch up. No new tasks, nothing new to do from me. Take this time to get on the right track.

But promise me one thing. For the next 21 days, you're going to book 1 hour a day – just 60 minutes – to work on your business development. Mark it in the calendar now so nothing gets in the way. We want this to become an essential element of your business, a good business habit if you like. Take a look at [this interesting article](#) if you have time.

DAY 10

MAIN FOCUS FOR TODAY:

TASK 1: START WORKING ON THE GREAT TO-DO LIST



Time for the task: 45 minutes

What I wanted to do today is start working on The Great To-Do List, and this is what we need: write down what you need to do in your business in the coming year in a form of a task that starts with a verb, for example: revise my CV, update copy on my website, send out follow-up emails to existing clients, etc., etc. You just want to have one huge The Great To-Do List.

Let's work on it today and tomorrow!

DAY 11

MAIN FOCUS FOR TODAY:

TASK 1: START WORKING ON THE GREAT TO-DO LIST



Time for the task: 15 minutes

We're still working on the Great To-Do List today, just take a look at what you already have and try to add something today.

Tomorrow, I'll share my Great To-do List with you so you can add even more tasks – isn't this fun? 😊

DAY 12

MAIN FOCUS FOR TODAY:

It took me several hours to put together all to-dos. I tried to organise tasks between back office and front end, as well as under different groups of tasks. You'll see that not everything applies to you, or some numbers will be different in your case.

I have finished compiling our Great To-Do List using many suggestions left for me on my blog. Thank you so much, everyone! You can feel free to modify The Great To-Do List with your own tasks in order to modify it to your needs. I've also left spaces for your own deadlines. Oh and please do change the colour scheme – colours are not my strong side!

Following my system of getting things done, I created an Excel spreadsheet with all the tasks and a separate tab for tasks to do this week. You can just pull out tasks from the masterplan to add them to the list for this week.

Here you'll find both the Excel and Word version:

The Great To-Do List [Word version](#) (password: boostin2015)

The Great To-Do List [Excel version](#) (password: boostin2015)

Starting from tomorrow we're moving into a more practical part of the camp so you'll see what applies to you and what doesn't.

DAY 13

MAIN FOCUS FOR TODAY:

I don't know about you, but in my case, if I'm not organised from the inside, I struggle to manage my business flawlessly throughout the year.

For example, last year I've been considering buying a new CAT tool that I've heard many good things about, but I never had the time to actually do some research and assess whether this new tool is really needed. I never made any decision, and thinking about this tool has been coming back again and again. I was a bit angry with myself that I kept saying I'll consider buying it but I never did, I never found the time to think about it. Instead of spending one, maybe two hours to decide, it took me five or six occasions to think that I haven't done that yet. Vicious circle and many hours lost. Do you ever feel the same?

This year I'm committed to avoid it and make all decisions in relation to my back office operations today. In fact, I went through some items from the list this weekend, so here are my results:

- ✓ *Set up filing system at home – done, I have arranged all documents by date and create efficient systems to keep records tidy throughout the year. I'll need to revisit it in January next year.*
- ✓ *Review payments and expenses – done, I went through my bank statements from the past three months and identified recurrent expenses that I could eliminate, e.g. software subscription I wasn't using, or magazines I wasn't reading (this is always a problem, as I never know whether I should stop subscribing or not, so I keep constantly thinking about it throughout the year). I also reviewed my incidental expenses to help me with...*
- ✓ *Create a budget – done, I have a monthly budget with all expenses on the list, plus my salary, plus profits that I need to make to re-invest money into my business. Review in January next year.*

Now, when comes to decisions that I'm tackling today (all come from The Great To-Do List):

- ✓ *Improve time management – instead of saying I need to learn how to prioritise, I'll actually do something about it today. I received some good tips from a colleague who's writing a [blog](#) on productivity for translators and I'll read the resources today.*
- ✓ *Review translation process – because I want to make it clear to my clients how I'm adding value to my translations, I'll review the translation process to write some copy about it, but also to have a new infographic designed. Today.*

- ✓ *Review Quality Assurance process – I vaguely remember there are going to be some changes to QA standards in translation this year, so I need to look into it today to see if I need to make any changes.*
- ✓ *Look into Getting Things Done – last year I was a bit upset because I kept changing my GTD system every quarter, looking for the best solution. This year I give myself 30 minutes for research, and if I don't come up with anything ground-breaking, I'm leaving it as it is until January next year.*
- ✓ *Look into buying new equipment – bought new IT hardware last year so no equipment is planned this year. Easy and deferred until January next year.*
- ✓ *Look into buying new software – almost all tools that I'm using are now subscription-based, so I don't need to make any investments.*
- ✓ *Look into buying new CAT tools – no, I really don't have the time to do it this year, so it's time to man up and say I'm not investing in new CAT tools in the coming year.*
- ✓ *Look into shared workspaces – I've been thinking about it throughout the previous year, but now that I actually have to decide, I know it's not something for me. I work best in my office at home and while it may be working for others, shared workspaces are not for me. Deferred until July the coming year though – see, I'm not that tough.*

So, this is my commitment for today and it means that all back office items will be ticked off my list, and I'll get some peace of mind this year. Starting from tomorrow, we're moving into the exciting realms of marketing and reaching out to clients... Are you ready? :)

You can also check out [this](#) great article on time management.

DAY 15

MAIN FOCUS FOR TODAY:

I think that you also enjoyed getting some important things out of the way. I managed to finish my re-drafted translation process (just the outline, I'll need it later), and I decided to introduce two new elements of my working routine to help with time management: I'll always select one task that has the highest priority on each day and I'll make sure I do it in the morning and I'll only be checking social media when I take breaks, rather than having my Facebook and Twitter on almost all the time.

Today is a good time to email all existing agency clients with:

- ✓ *An updated CV,*
- ✓ *Updated USP/edge/proposal, however you want to call it,*
- ✓ *My availability over the next 2-3 months.*

I'm going to do it today because it's a relatively quick and painless task, and it's nice to check up on existing clients. My list of agency clients isn't that long, so it's a yet another argument to do it today. This task is best done in the middle of the week, as both Fridays and Mondays aren't the best days for these sorts of things.

Here's what I have to do today:

- ✓ *Update all of my CVs,*
- ✓ *Write a new list of benefits and my strong points,*
- ✓ *Draft letters,*
- ✓ *Contact all agency clients,*
- ✓ *If not yet connected, connect with existing agency clients on LinkedIn.*

Nice and easy task for today, also giving me the opportunity to take good care of my existing clients.

DAY 16

MAIN FOCUS FOR TODAY:

My task for today requires a bit more research, and I'm really hoping that you'll find it useful, too. Here's what I'm going to do.

TASK 1: THE CLIENT WISHLIST



Time for the task: 15 minutes

I'm going to go through my records (I have an unhealthy number of Excel workbooks with potential clients to contact, as well as a whole folder with favoured websites to follow up) and trim the list down to 20 agency and 50 direct clients I want to contact. These won't be just some random links or leads, but people I really wish I could work with (fitting in my segments – as mentioned in previous days). My Client Wishlist.

TASK 2: WHY DO I WANT TO WORK WITH THEM?



Time for the task: 15 minutes

Do you remember the 'why' I talked about earlier on? I think it's equally important when we're actually reaching out to people to make sure there's a reason why we want to work with them (of course, making money aside) and that we can spell this reason out. Don't you think that it would make a great opening paragraph in every email you send out?

TASK 3: WHAT DO I HAVE THAT WOULD INTEREST THEM?



Time for the task: 30 minutes

My why aside, I need to have something that would convince my potential clients that I'm a good match for their company. With every client from my Wishlist, I note down three arguments or three benefits I can use to convince them to work with me. I do that looking at their website, reading about them online, checking out their Facebook and LinkedIn. With this strategy, I can target them more personally.

DAY 17 AND 18

MAIN FOCUS FOR TODAY:

My plan for these two days is to concentrate on planning my marketing for the year. I have compiled my Customer Wishlist yesterday, and to be able to reach out to these prospects, I need to make sure I'm ready. Here's what I'm going to do in the next two days.

TASK 1: MARKETING AUDIT



Time for the task: 30 minutes

The purpose of marketing audit is to assess your current marketing assets and tactics. Here's how I go about it:

- ✓ *Website: review, plan any fixes needed, update, check Analytics.*
- ✓ *Online profiles: review all profiles linked to my name, add new ones to the list of existing profiles, update information, take down any old materials, check links.*
- ✓ *Social media: review all profiles linked to my name, update information, assess benefits.*
- ✓ *Printed materials: review all existing printed materials, plan any changes needed, order more if needed.*
- ✓ *SEO: check results, analyse keywords, check backlinks.*
- ✓ *Digital marketing materials:*
 - *PDF brochures and leaflets: review, update information, order a new one if needed,*
 - *Digital portfolio: review, update and change texts,*
 - *Presentations, prezis: review, update and change copy, prepare new if needed,*
 - *Invoices and estimates: update information,*
 - *Email signature: review and update.*

I'll work on all updates I can implement myself this weekend, and for anything else, I'll place orders on the 18th day.

TASK 1: MARKETING PLANNING



Time for the task: 60—90 minutes

For my marketing plan, I fill out a very simple marketing template. First, I include the results of my marketing audit plus external assessment under current situation analysis (my external assessment often includes SWOT and PESTEL analysis, you can learn more about these in my [book](#)). Then, I think about my objectives and goals which are directly derived from my balanced scorecard and business goals. Then, I draft a careful analysis of my target audience, dividing it into segments. Following this, I list all marketing tools

that I'm going to use for each segment. Finally, I plan my budget (money and time), as well as how I'm going to implement my marketing.

The last element for me is to design a marketing calendar, that is to write down what I'm going to do exactly each month. You can either use a Word table or an Excel spreadsheet (I tend to keep my marketing plan in the same workbook as my Masterplan for the year).

Here's [my basic template](#) that I'm going to work on this weekend (password: boostin2015).

DAY 19 AND 20

MAIN FOCUS FOR TODAY:

How was this marketing retreat? I managed to complete my audit and write down what needs fixing, and then worked on all those elements I could fix myself (e.g. updated CV, brochure, profile on my website, online profiles). The rest needs help from the outside, so I'm going to plan everything in detail this Wednesday when I have some more time and order materials from designers, send website changes requests to programmers and some texts for editing.

In the meantime, I can work on tackling agency clients from my Client Wishlist. Here's my plan for the next two days.

TASK 1: RE-CONNECT WITH LOST OR SPORADIC CLIENTS



Time for the task: 60—120 minutes

I don't know what about you, but sometimes I just get one request from a client, be it an agency or direct client, everything goes well, they're happy with results, and I either hear from them twice a year, or never again. Today, I'm going to reconnect with them. Here's how I'm going to do it:

- ✓ *Look for people I was in touch with on LinkedIn and connect.*
- ✓ *Send an email commenting on something I noticed about their company, giving some updates on my profile, and including a Call to Action (a very important element: what do I want them to do?).*
- ✓ *Follow-up in a month to discuss availability.*

TASK 2: CONNECT WITH CLIENTS FROM THE WISHLIST



Time for the task: 30 minutes

This was easier, but how to connect with clients we want to work with but we've never been in touch with before? Here's how I'm going to do it tomorrow:

- ✓ *Do my research – learn about the scope of their work and needs, plus match it against my skills.*
- ✓ *Look for shared connections or ask for a recommendation – some of my colleagues and connections already are working for the companies I want to add to my list. I'll start by asking them for some contact details or recommendations.*
- ✓ *Connect on LinkedIn – if I don't know anybody who could introduce me, I'll look for project managers working for this company on LinkedIn and connect with them.*
- ✓ *Send an email – following this, I'll drop them an email (or use LinkedIn's messaging function), which will be a well-crafted letter ending with a CTA.*

✓ *Follow-up – in about a week, I'll follow up on the messages I sent.*

What are your plans?

DAY 21 AND 22

MAIN FOCUS FOR TODAY:

Over the next two days I'll be getting ready to market to direct clients. I know it won't start before next week, but I want to be done with the biggest chunk of preparations today. Here's my plan for the next two days.

TASK 1: WEBSITE

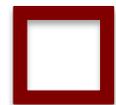


Time for the task: 30 minutes

Over the previous days, I identified what needed changing on my website to target the clients from my Wishlist. Here's what I need to do:

- ✓ *Change home page,*
- ✓ *Revise the slogan on the header,*
- ✓ *Revise 'About me' page and add more visible 'Why work with me',*
- ✓ *Add pages for online communication specialism,*
- ✓ *Add a specific landing page for online communication services in Polish,*
- ✓ *Update metadata and keywords,*
- ✓ *Send all new pages to my editor.*
- ✓ *My biggest challenge is to change the angle of my website to reflect the changes in my USP without redesigning the whole thing.*

TASK 2: MARKETING MATERIALS



Time for the task: 120 minutes

When comes to the materials I'm using to market my services to direct clients, they also need an update. Here's what I'm going to do:

- ✓ *Prepare a new PDF brochure for direct clients,*
- ✓ *Order two infographic brochures, one with my profile and one with my services,*
- ✓ *Prepare a business presentation on prezi,*
- ✓ *Update my business proposal,*
- ✓ *Send all new materials to my editor.*

TASK 3: GETTING READY TO REACH OUT



Time for the task: 120—180 minutes

Apart from preparing all of these documents, I need to put some content on my website that would be relevant to the clients from my wishlist. To do that, I need to:

- ✓ *Prepare an editorial calendar for my client-oriented blog,*
- ✓ *Prepare a downloadable PDF to encourage potential clients to sign up to my newsletter,*
- ✓ *Write up two blog articles before next week.*

What are you up to these two days?

DAY 23, 24 AND 25

MAIN FOCUS FOR TODAY:

Here comes the time of a big accountability check. On the day 21, I told you what I was going to do and... I didn't have enough time. Things got in between, I had to spend more time on other things, therefore lagging behind with my business development. Here's what I did and didn't do:

- ✓ *Website: I went through it and made thorough plans, but I haven't changed anything yet specifically, or talked to my programmer.*
- ✓ *Marketing materials: drafted most of them and emailed designers, but they still need finishing and editing.*
- ✓ *Getting ready to reach out: I jotted down some ideas for the client-oriented blog, but I'm far from having an actual editorial calendar, nevermind the other two points.*

So I failed to keep my own deadlines. Something is telling me I'm not the only one with this problem... I took some time to analyse why this happened, and here are my thoughts:

- ✓ *I underestimated the amount of time I needed to do things.*
- ✓ *I forgot that some of it is creative work that needs thinking and going through it in your head before it's done. I didn't schedule this buffer time.*
- ✓ *I had to travel around London a bit in the past two days and I assumed I'd be as productive in public transport and cafes as I'm in my home office.*

It's not even really my fault, it's not that I was lazy or I decided not to work, I just mis-planned and mis-managed my own time. Does it ever happen to you? How do you deal with it? How do you catch up?

PS I'll be working on all overdue tasks over these three days, not to carry the delay further. This is also your time to catch up with all your tasks!

DAY 26 AND 27

MAIN FOCUS FOR TODAY:

I managed to catch up and the good thing is that I'm back on the right track! The next two days are going to be devoted to reaching out to direct clients. Here's my plan.

TASK 1: FOLLOW-UP WITH EXISTING CLIENTS



Time for the task: 60 minutes

They're likely to be all back and settled in, having conducted all early meetings in the month. It's the right time to touch base with one-off clients who ordered my services last year. I'm going to write to them with a new, expanded offer and I'll suggest discussing their needs for this year. Nice and easy.

TASK 2: REACH OUT TO CLIENT WISHLIST



Time for the task: 60—120 minutes

It's going to be a bit harder to get in touch with some 50 potential clients that I identified and while I'm going to start doing it tomorrow, I'm definitely not going to be able to tackle all of them one day. It's all about building relationships anyway. What I'm going to do is to dig out information about my prospects, connect with their representatives online, follow their social media accounts and try to get their attention there. After I get some reaction, I'll ask for the best person to send a personalised offer to. This isn't that easy at all and may take a while, but it works for me!

TASK 3: PLAN HOW TO REACH OUT TO POTENTIAL CLIENTS



Time for the task: 30 minutes

Apart from contacting prospects that I already identified, I'm going to plan where to come across and show my offer to new potential clients. To do that, I'm going to look at:

- ✓ *Associations that have my potential clients in their membership.*
- ✓ *Events that my potential clients will attend.*
- ✓ *Publications that my potential clients read and offer guest articles.*

This is what's going to keep me busy in the next 2 days. How are you doing?

DAY 28 AND 29

MAIN FOCUS FOR TODAY:

By now you must've realised that I have a slight obsession with planning. Yes, everything has to be organised and noted down in my calendar, otherwise I know I'd feel I'm losing control and my business is taking over my life.

One of the biggest problems I have is with all these interesting events, both online and in-person in London. Whenever I see something in any way related to my business, I feel I absolutely have to be there. This must be some sort of a business-oriented FOMO. So every year, and this year even more so, I draft a careful plan of events I can attend (both from the financial perspective and time-wise).

TASK 1: CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Time for the task: 30 minutes

Here's how I go about it. I ask myself the following questions:

- ✓ *Is there anything I need to learn this year to help me serve my customers better?*
- ✓ *Does any of these involve taking a course longer than 3 months?*
- ✓ *Can any of these be tackled by a 1-day event?*
- ✓ *What can I learn by myself at home?*

This is how I make decisions when comes to CPD and learning new skills. Based on my answers, I always plan four quarters of a year and I only commit to one skill within each quarter. For example, right now I'm developing my content marketing skills. I focus my reading around it, and I take one short course. If there's anything interesting coming up that's not under this skill, it goes in my calendar for after.

TASK 2: EVENTS



Time for the task: 30 minutes

If you're like me, you're certainly feeling a bit overwhelmed with all the events for translators available, plus there are thousands and thousands more in our areas of specialisation. It took me really long to accept that I'm not going to go everywhere and do everything. Last year I started using this simple technique: MoSCoW. It stands for:

- ✓ *Must have: events I absolutely have to go,*
- ✓ *Should have: events I should go to, but it's not the end of the world if I don't,*
- ✓ *Could have: it would be nice if I went there, but I'll see how it goes,*
- ✓ *Won't have: sorry, no time or money to go there this year.*

In the beginning of each year, I plan my *must-haves* and *won't-haves*, and then I fill out the rest on a rolling basis.

One important thing I wanted to point out here is that I always plan events when I'm learning or socialising with colleagues separately from client acquisition events. I'd advise you to plan for both.

TASK 3: MEMBERSHIPS



Time for the task: 30 minutes

January is a good month to review your memberships, too. I'm currently a member of two translation associations, one national register, and two non-translation related associations (that's where my clients are members). Whenever I'm renewing my memberships, I always think not whether it's worth being a member, but have I done everything I could to make the most of my membership. If I haven't, I plan to make it better next year.

For example, I'm a member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing in the UK. I'm using their website and resources a lot, I really enjoy the article, but I know there's so much more I could get out of this association. It's my challenge for this year.

Are you ready to plan your CPD, events and memberships?

DAY 30

MAIN FOCUS FOR TODAY:

Today is the last business day in our business camp. How did it go? I usually do my business development in January because it's traditionally been my slowest month when comes to translation. In the past, I'd get worried that this is it, nobody is ever going to hire me again. Over the years I learned that this is just how January is for me and I decided to spend this month on business development and getting done things that I don't have the time for during the year. If you ever happen to have a slower period, go through this One Month Business Camp again and do a couple of exercises. You'll see it's going to work magic.

Now, I wanted to give you something to keep for the whole year. It's a very easy checklist and I'm using it together with my weekly plan, I literally copied it in:

WW promotion - Regulars		
Promotion	Monday	Research 2 new agencies and 5 new direct clients
Promotion	Tuesday	Write to 2 new agencies and follow-up with 2 from last week
Promotion	Wednesday	Write to 2 existing direct clients and follow up with 3 from last week
Promotion	Thursday	Send personalised business proposals to 3 new clients
Promotion	Friday	Send personalised offers to 2 new clients

That's right. Every week, I do exactly these things:

- ✓ *Monday – research 2 new agencies and 5 new direct clients*
- ✓ *Tuesday – write to 2 new agencies and follow-up with 2 from last week*
- ✓ *Wednesday – write to 2 existing direct clients and follow up with 3 from last week*
- ✓ *Thursday – send personalised business proposals to 3 new clients*
- ✓ *Friday – send personalised business proposals to 2 new clients*

If you do this throughout next month, every week, with these numbers, you'll see a change in your business.

So? How did it go? Please remember to [add your comments on the page](#) using password "businesscamp". I'd love to hear your comments, too.

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