Plans are useless, but planning is invaluable

I have a button that says "Spending my life in Plan B." I think most of us have spent a lot of our lives in Plan B or Plan C or Plan X, Y, or Z. It is a fact of life that few things turn out as we plan them, that “Man Plans and God Laughs.”

Corporations used to do long-range 10-year plans, a process that has fallen somewhat into disrupute in our fast-paced world. And yet, the process of planning remains incredibly valuable. Why?

Because by thinking things through in advance we learn about ourselves. Even if our plans may not turn out as conceived, when thinking through knotty issues we identify the pitfalls and traps into which we could easily have fallen. When I plan, I like to emotionally project myself forward, to vividly imagine myself in great detail living in what ever outcome I am attempting to create. Do I truly like and value the outcome? Is the desired physical result creating for me the emotional feeling I desire? Is it long lasting, or brief and fleeting?

We are remarkably poor predictors of what will make us happy and for how long. Any process that increases our ability to predict what will bring us contentment and satisfaction is of great value.

Emotional feeling, contentment, and satisfaction may seem like strange topics for a business blog to dwell on. BUT, once we are beyond the survival level of Maslov's Hierarchy, it is feelings that motivate us. We are now primarily a service economy where it is providing the customer experience that dominates.

“In preparing for battle
I have always found that plans are useless,
but planning is indispensable.”

~ Dwight D. Eisenhower
And lastly, when we plan properly, we think through all the alternatives. So then when life throws us the inevitable curve balls, we are well positioned to be flexible in switching to the next best alternative with a minimum of stress, and a rapidity that will leave the competition far behind and our friends and supporters awed!