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When you're starting with your business idea, you will be looking at how successful businesses have accomplished their success. You will see a lot of different sizes, markets, and business models. But they all have one thing in common: they've built a system that works.

Their long-term and short-term goals may have changed through the years, but the system that has kept them running never has. That system is the core of every business.

A sustainable bootstrapped business is successful when you have found a repeatable, reliable, and resilient system to continuously provide a value-producing product to paying customers at a profit.

Since "system" is such an abstract term: look at it as a set of rules and guidelines, like a recipe. To make a tasty omelet, you will need to mix the right ingredients and cook them for the right time, at the right temperature, using a specific technique. A business is the same.

Having a recipe in place will make the transition from the Preparation Stage into the Survival Stage less chaotic. But, it's still important to think of the core growth engine of your business before you start selling your product to your audience.

A business without goals is an aimless venture. But goals are reached and exceeded. New goals arrive in their place, and they often change shape mid-operation. A goal is meant to become obsolete. A system is intended to endure and allow you to reach your goals in the first place.