

Raising The Bar With Strategic Planning That Works

"Strategic planning is a colossal waste of time." I've heard this many times over the years. And in most cases, I agree because it is very difficult and often done poorly. Furthermore, many leaders have had bad experiences wasting large sums of money hiring big consulting firms with very smart people who come into their company to analyze it and tell them what to do. Only to have the final recommendation shelved because the consultant had not actually ever led a business to sustained success before, and the consultant did not adequately engage key company leaders and difference-makers in the strategic planning process.

But over the last 35 years I have been fortunate to work with and learn from several leaders who were very good at strategic planning and building businesses. I have borrowed and built upon what they taught me to create my own authentic approach that I have used as a CEO, COO, President, CMO and now consultant and coach to:

- Turn around struggling businesses.
- Reinvigorate the growth of cash cows others thought to be stagnant.
- Capitalize on the full potential of growth engines.
- Launch new-to-the-world ideas into successful, thriving businesses.
- Integrate acquisitions, creating a new and more powerful and synergistic organization.
- Help families align on a vision and chart a prosperous course for their enterprise.

It's About The Planning, Not The Plan

As U.S. General Dwight D. Eisenhower (1890 - 1969) was fond of saying "It's about the planning, not the plan". I couldn't agree more. Often potential clients ask me why we can't just go offsite for a few days and just hammer out a strategic plan. I understand their sense of urgency and desire for action, having been in their shoes, but many of the business building "aha moments" and breakthroughs that I have seen over the years spring from the cross-functional work sessions when probing, analyzing, and building the plan collaboratively, and NOT simply when the plan has been distributed to people as a game plan for action. It's about the planning, not the plan.

When you mention the word "plan" to most people they think of something concrete such as a travel plan or a blueprint used by builders. These plans identify a specific beginning and end with precise steps along the way. These plans are neat, prescribed, determined - and manageable. You figure out what to do and then do it. But not all types of plans have that level of precision. In a fluid, unpredictable environment you need to have a very different understanding of plans and planning. In military strategy, this is well understood because leaders know that their strategy must withstand contact with the enemy. Similar to military strategy, business strategy is developed and applied in an increasingly fluid, unpredictable

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environment, and the distinction between planning and the plan is evermore relevant for senior executives charged with crafting a company's strategy and bringing out the best in their people.

In my work I find that some leaders just want to check the strategic plan box and get on with the work at hand. Or in some cases, their expectations of what can be achieved with a strategic plan are unrealistic. The model in their mind is more like a blueprint plan for a house or building. They anticipate that by doing the necessary analysis and writing down how their business will succeed, the world will be converted from uncertain to certain. In their eyes the strategic plan becomes a device for control rather than one of guidance. Successful strategic planning is not about controlling. It's about unleashing the collaborative and innovative spirit of the people you lead by *focusing* them collectively where their energy and effort will fuel the most sustained growth, much like a coxswain focuses a rowing crew.

Leaders who want to use strategic planning merely to fix the persistent ambiguity and uncertainty in their business today will be disappointed. When inevitably a plan does not predict the future with perfection, this can manifest into the mistaken belief that strategic planning is a colossal waste of time and resources. Leaders then find themselves simply ignoring any document that has been produced, and their followers lose faith in the ability of their leaders.

As I look back over many years creating strategic plans, I realize that none were close to perfect or clairvoyant. Still, I encourage leaders to think of the plan as a guidance tool, and focus on the planning *process* itself as the engine for achieving the sustained growth they desire. It's a mechanism for bringing out the best in the people they lead, and seeing which of their leaders will step up and which leaders will step back. As many athletes have learned, most of the joy and fulfillment is in the journey, not at the finish line. I also remind impatient leaders that we will not wait until the strategic plan is finalized to take action. By the time the plan is fully developed and rolled out to their entire company, we are already knee deep in the implementation of the ah-ha ideas and actions that emanate throughout the collaborative strategic planning process.

Servant leaders avoid the strategic planning trap of simply summarizing everything that is going on in the business today, and then putting the plan on the shelf. That is a colossal waste of everyone's time.

The best strategic plans drive tough choices and accountability deeper into the organization, focusing resources where they create the most economic value. Remember, the best plans are:

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- Grounded in stakeholder vision, principles and core values
- Preserves and leverages core strengths
- Developed collaboratively by the entire leadership team, with broad input
- A provocative springboard for big business building ideas
- Based on honest assessments of the organization and the dynamics of the market
- Balanced cross-functionally - aligned across functions, business units and lines of business
- Driven down to focused goals and performance measures that will become the roadmap for accountable execution – don't try to boil the ocean
- Accomplished in a manner that builds a shared vision and commitment
- Explicit and well communicated – answers the questions: what does it mean to me? How do I personally make a difference and help us win?
- Engrained into the fabric of the organization as a dynamic, core business practice that helps keep the company continually focused on its strategic direction

Strategy Built on Vision, Mission, and Values

The fundamental purpose of strategic planning is to align a company's vision and mission with its core values and strengths, and chart a path forward that will deliver desired results over a sustained period of time. This is the strategic foundation. Without alignment on vision, mission and values, planning lacks a stable foundation. Vision defines the destination. Mission includes everything needed to make it a reality - including your core values, purpose, the promise you make to your customers and stakeholders, the reasons to believe that promise, and your strategic plan for successful execution. Core values are also important because they, along with the organization's core strengths, provide the organization with a sturdy foundation upon which to build growth strategies, tactics, and ultimately the execution and actions that will deliver desired results. The strategic plan is the roadmap that helps leaders and their teams navigate the journey, *but the planning process itself is where the real magic happens*. More about that later.

Even if your organization already has well-defined vision, mission, and core values statements, they should be reviewed and used as guideposts throughout the strategic planning process. Don't assume that every member of a team can articulate the company's vision, mission, and core values. Based on my experience, most cannot, which is why I recommend beginning with the building of this important strategic foundation. Even if everyone has these statements committed to memory, you must ensure they are current, truly resonate with stakeholders and team members, and your team is resolutely aligned with them. Even if you are only confirming alignment, it's worth it.

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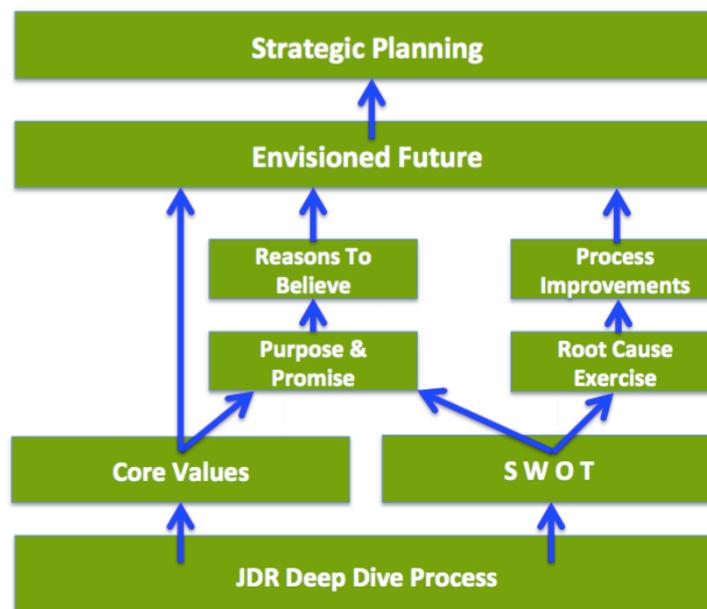
Any successful strategic planning process should include deep-dive analyses and multiple work sessions with the core leadership team in which they objectively and honestly assess their organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT).

	Helpful To Achieving Goals	Harmful To Achieving Goals
Internal Origin <small>Attributes of the organization</small>	Strengths	Weaknesses
External Origin <small>Attributes of the environment</small>	Opportunities	Threats

1

The rest of the planning process flows similar to the chart below, building up to the vision and plan to make it reality.

Building the Foundation



Vision

The statement of your envisioned future helps your organization by painting a vivid picture of the success you hope to achieve. It is the inspirational articulation of your organization's dreams and hopes. It reminds everyone of what you are trying to achieve and build, and where your strategic plan can take you if executed well. While this vision statement doesn't detail how you're going to get there, it does set the direction for strategic and operational planning. When creating a vision statement, it's important to unlock the imagination of your team and dare to dream big. Your vision statement should capture the imagination and passion of your organization by articulating an aspirational destination, and not simply a goal.

Mission

A vital element of a company's mission statement is its fundamental purpose for existing *beyond making money*. The purpose should be engaging and somewhat idealistic, and it should reach beyond typical business goals. The secret to creating a great statement of purpose is to focus on why your organization exists at an existential level, not simply the products and services your organization provides. Making money or profits is not a purpose. It's how we keep score. While some might view this as unimportant, a Gallup study found that customers who are aligned with a brand or company's purpose give that company twice as much share of wallet as customers who are not aligned.

Southwest Airlines and CVS are great examples of companies with strong purpose statements that helped them stay the course through strategic challenges. When most airlines started charging passengers for checking bags, Southwest fell back upon its purpose statement of "To connect people to what is important in their lives through friendly, reliable and low-cost air travel." They decided to *not* charge their customers for checking bags, and made this decision part of a marketing campaign, leveraging it as yet another example of how they uniquely serve their customers with a powerful reason to believe their customer promise.

Similarly, CVS leaned into its purpose of "helping people on their path to better health" when they decided to discontinue the sale of tobacco products. While they lost short term sales and profits that were fueled by tobacco products, the longer term research showed that consumers were five times more likely to shop at CVS once they learned about this choice.

Once you have identified a unique, compelling, and aspirational purpose, it's time to articulate a succinct promise and the reasons to believe the promise. Ask yourself: what promise do you make to your most important consumers and/or customers? What are the most persuasive reasons for them to believe that you can deliver on that promise uniquely, or at least better than anyone else? This is so important because this section forms the bases for answering those important questions: What makes us special? How are we going to win?

Core Values

Core values are traits or intrinsic qualities that are considered worthwhile to your people and your stakeholders. They should be deeply held convictions. For companies, they are statements about how the organization will value their associates, customers, business partners, and stakeholders. Strong statements of core values that are authentic describe character-based actions that are innate to the core values held by most individuals within an organization. These collective values meld together to form your company's culture. If you think about your own life, your values should form the cornerstones for all that you do. If you are living true to your values, then they define where you spend your time and energy. The same should be true for your organization.

Objectives, Goals, Strategies, & Measures (OGSM)

Objectives, goals, strategies and metrics define the roadmap your team will use to get your organization from where it is today to the desired vision you have articulated. They specifically define who will accomplish what and by when. They must never simply be a summary of what is going on in your organization today, or the entire planning process will be a waste of time. The most effective and successful strategic plans help people throughout the company make strategic choices that will focus collective energy and resources where they will add the most economic value for your company and stakeholders.

Once the core leadership team builds its strategic foundation detailed above, it's time to craft the minimal number of objectives that will put their company on a course over the next three years that eventually delivers the envisioned future. Before the objectives are fully developed and finalized, it's important to engage difference-makers throughout the company in the strategic planning process by having each member of the core leadership team build and lead a sub-team of difference makers to contribute to the planning process, ensure the core leadership team didn't miss something, and fuel ownership of the plan throughout the organization. The leaders of each sub-team will play vital roles as you build the plan, and the JDR planning process is a proven tool to help them learn, grow, and force-multiply their leadership and collaborative influence. For the leader of the organization, this process can also be a great test to see which leaders are going to embrace transformational change with a growth mindset and step up, and which will attempt to preserve the status quo and step back.

Use Strategic Planning To Force-Multiply

How do leaders get their workforce strategically aligned on the truly important issues and fired up about raising the bar? If leaders want a performance-based culture of collaboration and innovation where people are truly committed to the company's success, they must help each and every person feel like they are personally important and connected to something

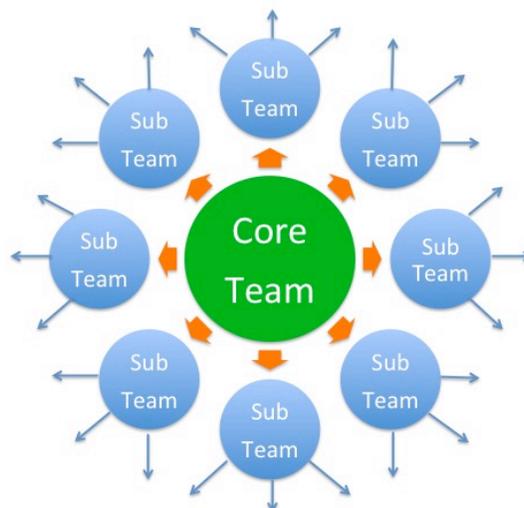
that truly matters. For leaders who fully grasp the importance of their servant role to the people they lead, a collaborative strategic planning process can be a robust vehicle for establishing the roots of engagement needed to raise the bar, bring out the best in the people they lead, and drive sustained growth. Servant leaders on the team will embrace this role, while those more self-interested and less focused on bringing out the best in others will likely struggle with it and step back.

Obviously, thorough analytics and insightful strategic thinking are important when developing a plan. But even in companies that invest significant resources developing a very smart plan, leaders often under-invest in the work required to elevate workforce engagement to the level needed to achieve their company’s full potential. I’ve seen very good strategic plans result in mediocre or even poor results because the plan was not executed by an aligned and committed workforce. Conversely, I’ve seen mediocre plans deliver outstanding results because the people executing the plan were aligned and committed to success.

Strategic planning doesn’t have to be, nor should it be, an ivory tower exercise. Instead, it should be a springboard for the collaboration and innovation needed to drive improved results. Key difference-makers throughout the organization should be engaged. I like to use a core leadership team to do the bulk of the planning, but also encourage these leaders to force-multiply their influence by forming and leading their own sub-team of difference-makers to help build the plan iteratively and with broader input. These sub-teams help the core leadership team search for blind spots that they are missing because they are not as close to the front lines. They also stir collaboration and engagement among the troops— who always appreciate being asked to help. Ultimately, they lead to a better, more informed plan that benefits from more broad-scale ownership throughout the company once the plan is executed.

Leaders Force-Multiply

Fueling Collaboration, Alignment, and Commitment



This process takes time to work correctly, and should not be rushed. Team members need to go back and forth from their day jobs and their team's work sessions to analyze and test-drive new insights and ideas, and the objectives, goals, strategies, and measures discussed below. The sub-teams should also be encouraged to reach deeper into the organization for feedback to ensure they are not missing something critical that could hamstring execution if ignored in the planning process. Engagement should be intentionally cultivated from the beginning of the planning process, and *not* simply when the plan is finished and deployed.

On several occasions, I have seen sub-teams uncover challenges and opportunities that were previously unrecognized by the core leadership team. When orchestrated well, this process can yield a more robust strategic plan, and fuel a more energized workforce eager to execute the plan like an owner rather than merely an employee. Here are a few examples where sub-teams made a difference:

- Recommended changes to a stage gate product development process that accelerated new product development and commercialization by solving dilemmas to which the leadership team was unaware.
- Identified a plethora of supply chain opportunities to simplify operations, consolidate vendors, reduce SKUs, shrink inventory, and improve customer service.
- Shined a light on behaviors inconsistent with the core values of the company, leading to the outplacement of leaders who were hamstringing the performance of the company.
- Crafted a plan to improve their company's website, re-engineered the e-commerce platform and improved the effectiveness of their company's digital marketing efforts.
- Highlighted problems with their company's sales force compensation plan and recommended changes that ultimately fueled increased sales.
- Identified the need for more training and leadership development at their company, recommended a new plan, and managed execution that led to improved retention of higher performing employees and lowered recruiting expenses.
- Uncovered multiple occasions of fraud within the company and made recommendations to remedy.
- Helped the owners and the board of directors realize that there was no viable long-term succession plan for continued family leadership of the company. This led to significant changes to roles and responsibilities on the senior leadership team that transformed the company.

Launching Sub-Teams

Once the core team has established the strategic foundation detailed above, it's time to form and launch sub-teams to help the leader of each strategic vector begin the strategic planning process. Below are a few tips for success:

Team Construction Criteria

1. **Size:** 4-10 members
2. **Complementary abilities and behavior:** Build a synergistic team that is more powerful than the sum of its parts by being attentive to the strengths and weaknesses of each member.
3. **Commitment:** Choose members that you are sure will step up to the plate.
4. **Development:** Use this work as an opportunity to develop difference-makers. Serving on a sub-team could also be an opportunity to provide a stretch assignment to a key retention employee that has been itching to make a bigger contribution.
5. **Cross-Fertilization and Networking:** Choose members capable of reaching out into the organization and networking to gain needed cross-functional insight and alignment across a broad range of functions within the company, as well as external business partners.
6. **Alignment:** Confirm membership with the core team leader before launching to help ensure a well-balanced approach across the company.

Team Initiation and Launch

Use key materials from the most recent core leadership teamwork session to educate sub-team members on purpose and process. Feel free to tailor it to your individual communication style and the unique needs of your team.

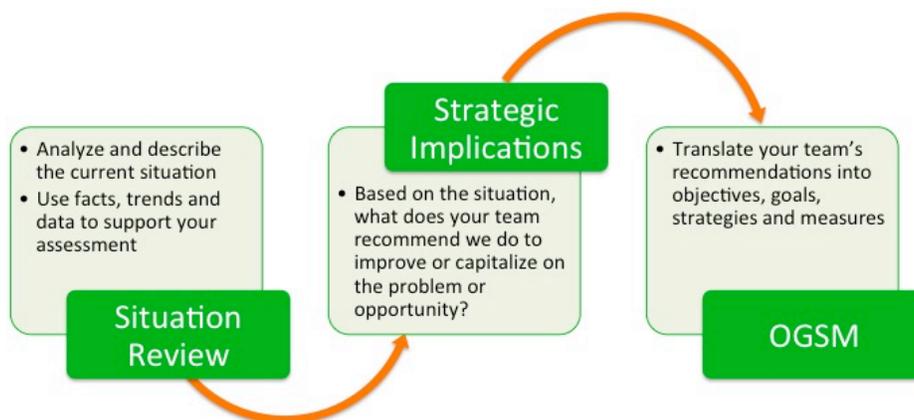
1. Make it clear up front that we are not trying to "boil the ocean". It will be vital that work is focused on what matters most and will have the biggest impact on results.
2. Leverage this as an opportunity to elevate commitment to the company by stressing the importance of this initiative, and how important team members are to future success. Most emerging leaders will welcome this opportunity and view it as a very positive step for the company. Leverage it.
3. Communicate to your team that they will be expected to reach out and into the organization for insight and feedback occasionally. Work with your team to create a list of difference-makers in your sphere of influence (and preferably outside your function) that you will want to tap into as the project progresses. The goal is to challenge assumptions that might be blind spots.
4. Review the principles of constructive contention with your team and encourage a candid discussion about how the team plans to operate to maximize success.
5. Review the output from the previous Core Team work session with your sub-team, seeking their input on items we might have missed. Bring feedback to the core team.
6. Record sub-team questions and feedback for sharing with the core team for purposes of growth, alignment, and follow-up.

Before diving into the drafting of objectives, goals, strategies, and measures, each sub-team leader should provide their sub-team with the perspective and context they need to maximize their contributions. They should share the heretofore work of the core leadership team in the

establishment of the strategic foundation. I encourage sub-team leaders to have their teams challenge and kick-around the work of the core team to find opportunities for improvement that he/she should then take back to the core team for consideration.

Once accomplished, the sub-team leader works with his/her team to further analyze the current situation (the situation review) beginning with a SWOT analysis and then diving deeper where further marketplace or company data and information is required. Once this situation review is completed, the team works to define the strategic implications of their conclusions and key findings. I also encourage leaders to engage their teams in brainstorming about their dreams for the future, which I call the *envisioned future*. Together, the situation review, the strategic implications, and the envisioned future form the platform for development of the objectives, goals, strategies, and measures in the strategic plan.

Roadmap to a Strategic Plan



Objectives

An objective is a qualitative statement of what the organization wants to achieve. Essentially, objectives translate the longer-term envisioned future into something more concrete for specific areas of the company, or strategic vectors. For some organizations, objectives might not change for several years. For others—like those in rapidly changing industries—objectives may change more frequently. While the envisioned future looks out over the next five to ten years, the objectives detail what must happen over the next one to three years to make the envisioned future a reality. A good way to test if you have landed on an objective is to keep asking “*Why?*” The answer will often ladder you up to a more meaningful objective. Also, if it describes *how* you will achieve the envisioned future, it belongs in the strategy portion of the strategic plan, and it is not an objective.

Examples of Objectives:

1. Grow the humor segment of the greeting card market, and increase our share of that growing segment.
2. Build a stronger relationship with education administrators that leads to increased sales.
3. Deliver better customer service than anyone in the industry.
4. Build a stronger organization, both organically and with new talent.
5. Meet stakeholders' sales and profits expectations.

Goals

A goal is a quantitative statement of what you want to achieve. Most goals begin with an active verb such as “increase” or “decrease” and define the amount of improvement required. For example, for a company with an objective of becoming a top rated employer, goals might include increasing employee satisfaction, increasing employee trust of leadership, and decreasing employee turnover, all by a specified amount (the measures can be more specifically defined in the measures section below). Again, if it describes *how* you are going to do it, it is not a goal.

Examples of Goals:

- Extend our leadership position in the glass cleaner category, growing market share to 65% by 2003.
- Reduce the time it takes us to achieve 80% ACV distribution from 12 weeks to 8 weeks after first ship date.
- Grow percentage of sales generated by new products launched within the previous three years to >25%.
- Reduce gross-to-net sales deductions from 5.2% to 3.8% by 2010.
- Steady decrease in SG&A as a percentage of net sales over time.

Strategies

Strategies are the heart and soul of a strategic plan. They describe *how* you are going to accomplish the goals, and include details of a general approach or methodology. For example, a strategy to increase employee satisfaction might be to implement more flexible work programs.

Examples of Strategies:

- Extend our brand equity and expansion-joint capabilities to adjacent markets.
- Field targeted marketing programs to fuel awareness and trial, and generate enough incremental sales to pay out the investment within 18 months.

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- Use fact-based selling to convince customers that they are missing growth opportunities.
- Re-engineer the new product development process to fail faster on bad ideas and improve the success rate of new products launched.
- Acquire niche building products companies that are synergistic with our competencies and cost structure, and accretive to profit margins.
- Develop, launch and manage a talent development program to increase supervisor accountability for coaching growth in our overall capabilities.

Measures

Measures help ensure balance and accountability in the execution of the strategic plan. Whether you call them measures, metrics or KPIs is unimportant. What is important is that they are a time-bound statement of what success looks like, and they are balanced across the organization. Measures should provide the foundation for a balanced scorecard to track progress and ensure appropriate course-correction and resource allocation as you navigate your strategic plan. This scorecard should gauge the overall health of the organization, and provide real-time feedback on progress achieving the growth you desire. It should tell you where you are right now relative to the destination you have stated in your vision, objectives and goals. Ultimately, this scorecard of measures is the tool your team uses to hold itself accountable, and should therefore connect directly to your incentive compensation and rewards programs.

Examples of Measures:

- Market Share by year or some other time period.
- Talent metrics related to critical core competencies, engagement, and growth, including 360 degree sourced feedback – not just top down assessment.
- Consumer metrics such as awareness, usage, and brand equity.
- P&L measures such as sales, COGS, gross margin, SG&A, operating margin, EBITDA, and all as a percentage of sales.
- Steadily increasing percentage of sales coming from new products launched over a defined period of time.
- Metrics designed to monitor the health of the base/core business.
- Balance sheet measures such as cash flow, working capital, CAPEX, ROCE, etc.
- Operational metrics such as lines on time complete, throughput, COGS savings, etc.
- Customer service metrics such as net promoter rating.
- Leading indicator measures (lead measures) that might provide early warning signals to course-correct before it's too late to improve your results (lag measures).

As I mentioned earlier, this process takes time. But that does not mean the team has to wait until the plan is finalized to take action on challenges and solutions identified during the planning process that the entire team agrees should be addressed immediately.

Once the strategic plan—including objectives, goals, strategies, and measures—has been drafted, the team works collaboratively and iteratively across strategic vectors (i.e. functions, departments, etc.) to ensure alignment, coordination, and synergy. At this point, I also like to step into execution to test-drive the strategic plan before fully executing it. Each strategic vector leader should work with his or her sub-team to assess the capacity and capabilities of the organization to execute the plan with excellence. Specifically, each team assesses and rates its current capabilities on a scale of 1–5 with 1=poor and 5=excellent. Then it recommends actions that will improve the organizational capability to level 5. The team details the resources required to make it happen, searches for lower value work that can be eliminated or at least reallocated to higher value work, and designates a leader for each action. Once this assessment is completed, it is used as a stepping-stone toward a three year action plan that details more specific actions required to execute the strategic plan, as you can see in the diagram below. These last two steps invariably cause the team to reconsider its strategic plan, focus it on what matters most, and make a few adjustments before it is locked in and fully deployed. Finally, I recommend dusting off the root cause analysis performed earlier in the process and using it as a process or gut-check to ensure nothing of significance was missed.



Some more aggressive and action-oriented leaders will look at this strategic planning method and suggest that it is cumbersome and consumes too much time, obviously a precious resource. They would rather go off-site for a couple of days, identify all the problems and challenges their team faces, determine the root causes, detail the actions needed to remedy the situation, and get back to work and get it done. They might even call this a strategic plan. But these are plans built on a foundation of weaknesses rather than strengths and core values. This approach could lead to some improved results, but it only scratches the surface. By urgently following the bold red line in the chart above, they miss out on the many opportunities for their team to learn, challenge, debate, collaborate, innovate, harmonize, bond and achieve true alignment on the path forward. Within six months their team is often right back to where they were before, looking a lot like that out-of-sync rowing crew I alluded to earlier.

When a leadership team embarks on a strategic planning process, their work will be socialized at lightning speed. As this happens, be ready for the workforce to be increasingly distracted by rumors, wondering what this might mean for them. Servant leaders have the emotional intelligence to realize that people don't fear change—they fear loss. Leaders should not only control the message, they should leverage it by proactively and transparently communicating what they are up to, even when they don't have all the answers. (For more about this please see my white paper *Who's In?*) Candor fuels employee engagement because people want to know that their leaders are doing their jobs. They also want to know that their leaders care enough about them to include them in planning the company's future. When managed proactively, leaders can use this process to drive commitment and ultimately improved results. That's much better than the uninspiring experience we've all had when we received a new company vision and strategic plan delivered to us from the ivory tower, only to file it and never reference it again.

I encourage leaders to seek and encourage constructive contention throughout this entire strategic planning process because it often uncovers the root causes of the biggest problems hamstringing growth in your company. Further, when constructive contention is orchestrated positively, it can lead to solutions and opportunities for growth.

Servant leaders force-multiply the power of constructive contention

I also encourage leaders to push to the end, fully documenting plans complete with roles, responsibilities, measures, and signatures—even though the plan will evolve over time. There are two reasons I recommend this. The first is to surface disagreements that may otherwise remain hidden. You can have all the discussions you like with your teammates and associates

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and think that your leadership team is in agreement . . . until you actually distill these discussions into a written document that people have to sign. It's in the crafting of your organization's position that you might realize that you're *not* all on the same page. The second reason is that it provides a platform from which change can be leveraged. This line-in-the-sand approach may seem paradoxical, but the very process of preparing the plan has you thinking about the future, making the tough choices that were previously glossed over during the daily grind, and re-allocating resources away from inefficiencies and toward growth. While the plan itself and the planners need to be flexible and adaptable, this linear and disciplined process will generate preparedness, drive accountability, and ultimately fuel results because it brings out the best in others. Most importantly, the impact on the people you lead and your organization will be lasting *if* you stay the course.

Remember, perfection is often the enemy of progress, and the plan is a work in progress. A strategic plan is not a set-and-forget instrument. It's a living and breathing document that *guides* alignment and collaboration, and helps people in your organization make tough choices. When managers talk about "giving up on strategic planning" I suggest that they haven't thought through how to keep their plan fresh. The fact that circumstances are changing rapidly is a very good reason to visit their plan regularly. How regularly? I believe the plan should be worked on a monthly basis by the leadership team in work sessions where the agenda is defined by the commitments made in the strategic plan.

If you found this article helpful, you might also like my new book titled [The Bridge To Growth](#). It's getting 5 stars on Amazon!



About the Author

Jude Rake is a veteran CEO with a 35+ year track record of building businesses to create economic value, from well known companies such as The Clorox Company, PepsiCo, and SC Johnson, to smaller family owned and private equity backed businesses. He founded [JDR Growth Partners](#) to help other leaders achieve growth.