

Key Parts to a Great Strategic Plan



As I head to Buenos Aires for the E0 Argentina University, I am excited to see how it all unfolds. Unlike other university events I have been to, I was on the committee that put this University together. So in a sense, like your own business, you get to see a

creation come together that you had a hand in making happen. I look forward to seeing all my friends and experiencing a great conference together.

Recently, I wrote a blog on bad strategy, so I wanted to make some points of what goes into good strategy. If you want to dig into any of these points in more details, there are a lot of good books out there. One that gives a good understanding and overview of each point discussed below is Stephen Lynch's book Business Execution for Results.

Here are what I feel are the key areas that should be part of an overall strategic plan:

- What is your vision for the future? (This could be your BHAG or long term direction on where you want to take the company.)
- What competitive forces will determine how your industry is likely to play-out in the coming years (competitors, new entrants, substitute offerings, suppliers, customers) – and what moves do you need to make to address the trends in these areas?

- What macro forces will impact your business environment (political, economic, social, technology) – and what moves do you need to make to address the trends in these areas?
- What geographic areas do you plan to serve, and how will you access those locations?
- Who is the ideal target market/customer for your brand?
- What is your target customer trying to achieve, and how will you address this need (now and in the future)?
- What core activities will you perform (now and in the future)?
- What non-core activities will you stop doing? How will you strategically position your brand in the marketplace?
- What benefits will you offer?
- What blunt, overt promise will compel your customers to take action?
- What key strategic moves do you need to make within the next 3-5 years to position your firm for future industry success?
- What goals and milestones will measure your success along the way?
- What is the current reality that you must deal with?
- What projects will you implement in the coming quarter to address your current reality and/or move your business in your chosen strategic direction?
- What Key Performance Indicators will track and drive the success of your current business model?

With answers to these questions, a lot of the guess work will be out of the way. Ultimately this will put you on the path to a successful company. Does your strategic plan answer most of these questions?

Business Regret: What's it All About?



If you listen to any of the successful leaders in business out there, you will hear them say over and over that it is about the people. In other words, to have a successful business, you must have the right people and they must be in the right positions, playing to their strengths. Then everything will be good.

Okay, sounds good, so let's go get the right people and everything else will be great. Then we will not need to keep the wrong people and instead, we will need to grow those that have potential. The problem with all this is that we are talking about people and when we do that, we have a lot of other factors that get in the way. Emotions are the big one, but also best intentions. You want to see the best in people, and you want to help others. These all have an influence in working to get the right team in place.

I have experienced this repeatedly, and have felt it in my gut when I knew I had the wrong person in the wrong seat and, given whatever circumstances, don't make a change right away. I was reminded of this by a recent blog that was written by my friend, Stephen Lynch. Stephen has written a book, Business Execution for Results, that is a great step-by-step for getting the strategic plan, the alignment, the key decisions and the execution all down, so your business is spinning like a top.

The blog he sent me was called ["The #1 Regret of Business Owners."](#) And guess what that one regret is? Hiring mistakes! As we just discussed, it's all about the people. Stephen says that sometimes it is good performers who don't fit into your culture. Other times, it is taking too much time to fix performance issues with someone that fits in, but is not achieving the desired result. Then there are the times we just hire the first person with a pulse to get it out of the way.

There is no perfect way to find people because, as we said, we are dealing with the complexity of humans and boy oh boy, can we be filled with intricacies. At Efficiencie, we have had success with process called Topgrading. It has helped us find good people, but sometimes we just have had them in the wrong seats. It may take some learning, as we have experienced, but we finally found two technical project managers that are knocking it out of the park! Thank you Chris and Sarah for great results in getting our projects done and making our clients happy!

Peter Drucker, in his very interesting book, [Post-Capitalist Society](#), tells us why people are so important. The book is all about the societal transformation from capital, land and labor, to a knowledgeable society where individuals are central.

Drucker says, "Knowledge is not impersonal like money. Knowledge does not reside in a book, a database, a software program; they contain only information. Knowledge is always embodied in a person; carried by a person; created, augmented, or improved by a person; applied by a person; taught and passed on by a person; used or misused by a person. The shift to a knowledge society therefore puts the person in the center."

We can see with this explanation from Drucker how important our people are, and getting the right ones on board and in the right seat is job number one for any leader! Do you have the

right people sitting in the right seats?