

Planning Insight From *Strategic Business Leader*®



Treat the Illness, Not the Symptom

When I attended the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business, we were taught to look at the underlying theory and system. The case method of teaching, whereby specific circumstances in which companies find themselves are diagnosed, was not the starting point. Instead, we started by learning economic, marketing and other theories and to understand the complex interrelationships that drive markets.

With this grounding, the approach when a business situation presents itself is to look for and address what underlies what is apparent. In other words, understand the illness, not the symptom.

For example, if an assessment of strategic gaps shows that marketing efforts are not producing sales, one's tendency might be to hire a new marketing firm or invest more in marketing or switch marketing channels - which would be addressing the symptom.

With a theory and systems approach, one would start with the assumption that poor marketing results may be less related to the effectiveness of the marketing and more attributable to something more fundamental such as product characteristics or pricing or customer service or a changing demand profile or any other of the whole host of factors that can affect sales. The answer may still end up to be "lousy marketing," but with the theory and systems approach there is more confidence that that indeed is the answer.

One reason why strategic planning can fail is that the understanding of the situation in which the organization now finds itself and the gaps between that and its vision of an ideal future is too simplistic and looks only at "current symptoms" rather than what underlies these symptoms. It's easy to be simplistic about assessing what's not right and how to fix it, but success is more likely to come from a more systematic approach that does not take the presenting evidence as the answer in and of itself



– Lee Crumbaugh, founder, *Strategic Business Leader*®

Did You Know?

In an analysis of 30 years of research on the effectiveness of planning, Brian Smith concluded in *Making Marketing Happen: How Great Companies Make Strategic Marketing*, "In plain English, planning works and not just in special areas. The advantages of strategic planning are not only financial but lie also in less tangible 'process' benefits such as team-working. In other words, planning seems to make us work better and not just more effectively."

Strategic Planning Focus of the Week: Getting and Maintaining Commitment

Implementing a strategic plan through execution of action steps is fundamentally a large scale organizational change process. No matter how logical and essential the change may seem to those driving it, very likely others in the organization will resist the change and present a barrier to successful implementation. Getting and maintaining the commitment of people in the organization to the plan and its implementation is a critical step.

It is important to understand why people in organizations do not embrace change. Research shows people resist change because:

- They see change as discomforting and burdensome.
- They see change as requiring a new mindset, behaviors and skills.
- They see change as unnecessary or wrong.
- They fear change.

Organizational leaders and the planning group can do much to develop and maintain commitment to the plan and its implementation. Actions to be taken fall into five categories: Leadership, Engagement, Message, Communications and Incentives.

Strategic Vision of the Week

Key Safety Systems: "We are a globally recognized leader in innovative technologies and advanced products that satisfy customers' needs in automotive safety restraint systems."

Strategic Planning Quote of the Week

"Progress is a nice word. But change is its motivator. And change has its enemies." - Robert Kennedy

Need cost- and time-effective strategic planning that works?
Strategic Business Leader® is your answer

Strategic Business Leader® is committed to delivering a strategic planning system, templates, tools and support that work. We avoid what's wrong with strategic planning as it has generally been applied.

Our Fast Track Strategic Planning System® focuses on what's most important:

- **Strategic Vision.**



- Strategic Gaps.
- Strategies with Action Steps to close the Gaps and move toward the Vision.



Our Fast Track Strategic Planning System[®] uses the knowledge and insights of the participants, based on Participative Process Consulting. The process and the facilitator provide the structure. The planning team decides where to go and how to get there.

Our Fast Track Strategic Planning System[®] is tested. It's a highly efficient process. It recognizes the reality that in today's world, organizations can devote only so many hours to planning. It's derived from experience working with many organizations – from large corporations and businesses to associations, educational institutions and not-for-profits.

Our Fast Track Strategic Planning System[®] makes effective planning accessible for all organizations. It offers tools, agendas, scripts and much more. You can conduct "self service" planning with our system, tools and templates, or get guided help or on-site facilitation as needed.

Go to www.strategicbusinessleader.com to learn about and access the Fast Track Strategic Planning System[®].

Strategic Business Leader[®] makes techniques, tools and training for achieving strategic success accessible for all organizations.

Our vision is every organization creates a plan with strategies and action steps leading to greater success.

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**Don't delay! Without a strategic vision and a plan to get there,
your future is not as bright as it can be.**

Strategic Business Leader[®]

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