



Title: Key Factors in Successful Strategic Planning

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Abstract: Presents the factors that seem to account for success in strategic planning.

Key Factors in Successful Strategic Planning

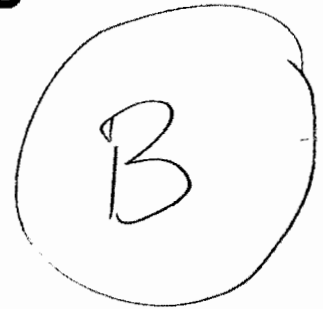
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Term Project

Management 520/620

Key Factors in Successful Strategic Planning



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INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

The original goal of our project was to identify factors that contribute toward the successful and unsuccessful implementation of strategic plans. After considerable literature research and discussions among ourselves, we concluded that there is no deterministic approach to implementing strategic plans to assure success. We discovered that defining success is ambiguous. We read many reports most supporting the necessity of strategic plans and others claiming that strategic plans are not necessary. As a result, we redefined our term project.

Our term project summarizes our learnings from extensive literature search. In this report you will find:

- Definition of strategic planning
- Key factors for successful strategic planning and implementation
- Case studies
- Conclusions and recommendations as a set of guidelines based on a synthesis of our literature search and group discussions.

The guidelines we developed, we believe, will increase the probability of a firm successfully developing and implementing strategic plans. However, one must exercise caution in using our guidelines because, as we said before, one of our learnings is that success is not a deterministic process. We believe that organizations must break away from the myth that if they follow a certain set of procedures, they will be successful.

We regard success as a stochastic process. Our learnings are summarized in the transformation of this quote:

from

"Life is not a destination, life is a journey."

to

"Strategic planning is not a destination, strategic planning is a journey."

BACKGROUND

This section covers a definition of strategic planning and success.

What Is Strategic Planning?

As we described in our Strategic Policies and Issues project, strategic planning has been through a "face lift". Strategic planning has been transformed from an analytical, "inside out" approach to a customer based, "outside-in" approach; from a deterministic, closed process to a holistic, open, democratic process. Today's strategic planning gurus place more emphasis on management's commitment as well as involving key employees, customers, suppliers, and distributors during the strategic planning.

Integrate Planning and Implementation

Strategic planning and implementation must be integrated into a dynamic process. Figure 1 demonstrates traditional and new way of strategic planning. Historically, implementation had been by far the most difficult step since it was separated from planning. For example, a case study shows that Precision Material took only six month to define its strategic plans, but full implementation of the new processes took another 18 months [8].

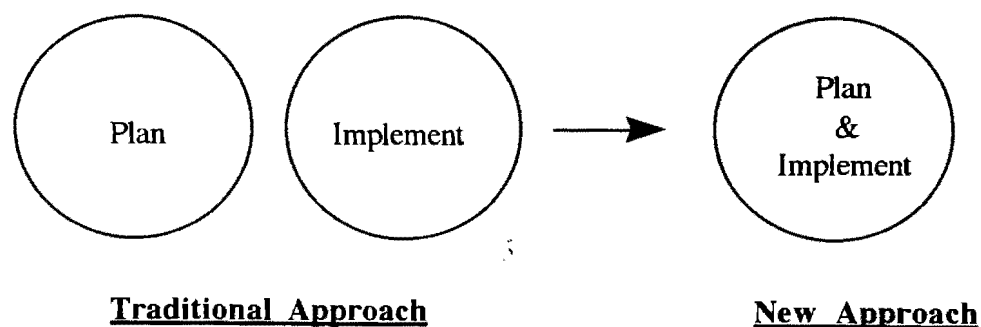


Figure 1. Traditional Strategic Planning and Implementation

Today's strategic planning is viewed as a never ending process. Strategic planning and implementation can not be separated (see Figure 1). Implementation must be an integral part of the management process, not a discrete module somehow glued on at the end after the planning is done. Strategic planning and implementation are inextricably intertwined. How a firm manages implementation is a function of its strategic position, its culture, and the complexity of its business processes [24]. Figure 2 demonstrates this integration in much more detail as follows:

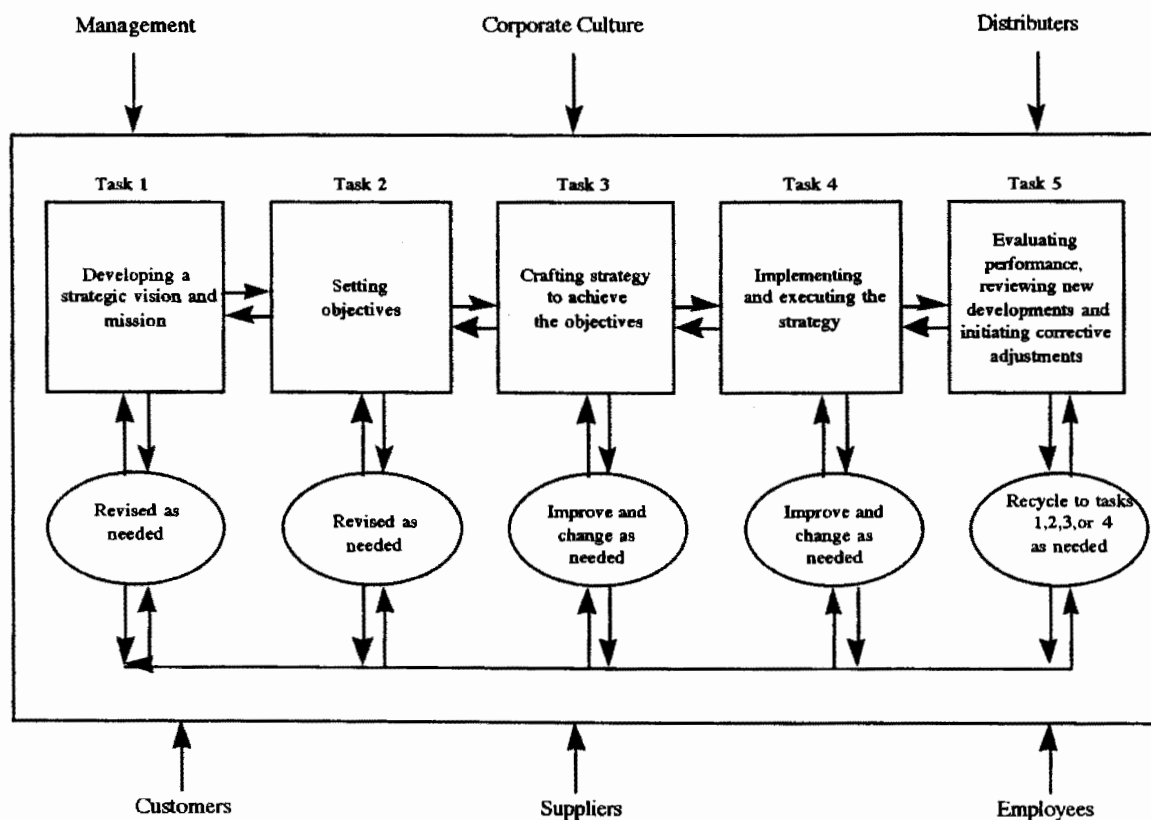


Figure 2. Definition of strategic planning as an integrated process [24] p9?

Effective strategic planning is a dynamic problem-solving process, rather than a scheduled plan. Team One believes that effective strategic planning is a comprehensive process of defining the problem, defining the environment of the problem, defining the expected solutions and finally defining the changes to reach the solution. The process is dynamic, not static.

Problem continually change hence the expected solution must change. It is hard to imagine applying measures that were planned several years ago to the current environment [14].

Even though there are a few cases where firms reach success without a strategic plan, it is commonly accepted that organizations achieve their goals more effectively and successfully through a strategic plan. A strategic plan helps them keep focused on what is essential and what is vital.

Success is a dynamic process, not a state

Team one asserts that success requires:

- A focus on optimizing the big picture not individual elements.
- Continuous teamwork, cooperation and communications among the different units.
- Success is defined by a firm's outer environment--its customers, retailers, suppliers.

Success is difficult to define. Success is not a state, it is rather, achievements over time. It is almost fatal to say that "we are successful" because this leads to false pride and failure.

Success is cyclical. There is a typical pattern of apparent success followed by apparent failure. For example, the Ford Edsel is commonly used as an example of momentous failure. But the lessons Ford learned from the Edsel inspired them to create new ways of looking at their customers and they developed the successful Mustang [6].

A second example is IBM and personal computers. IBM earned the title of industry leadership and success with its first personal computers. However, they lost success and leadership to more resourceful firms like Compaq. (Interestingly, many of the key people at Compaq were top managers at IBM's PC operation. They left IBM not because the grass was greener on the other side of the fence, but because the grass had turned brown at IBM).

Winston Churchill is a third example of the ephemeral nature of success. In the 1930's Winston Churchill was recognized as a failure in British politics. He was a cabinet member his 20's, but in the 1930's he was considered an eccentric has been. The story of his amazing leadership in World War II is well known. But, immediately after the war ended, he was voted out of office by the British citizens whose future he had just secured.

These three examples demonstrate how success is not a state, it's a cyclical process of success followed by failure, followed by success. . . .

We believe a good measure of success is to look at the performance of the entire organization in attaining and keeping delighted customers. This is much different than defining success as attaining the optimum performance of each of the individual components in a firm.

Traditional management literature portrays an image that a firm will perform optimally when each of its operations performs at their best. This belief is exemplified by Alfred P. Sloan, the powerful leader of General Motors from the 1920's to the 1950's. Sloan described in his book, My Years With General Motors, how divisionalizing General Motors and having each division do its best was a key to GM's turnaround [22].

Today, we know that in just about all cases, optimizing subparts of a system assures the total system is incapable of performing at its best and sometimes it may not even operate.

Russell Ackoff describes this well. Let's say a group of top automotive engineers want to design the world's best car using existing parts. They may select the best carburetor from Buick, the best brakes from Porsche, the best transmission from Mercedes. They continue this until they have identified the best of each part required for an automobile. Then the engineers are asked to take these parts and assemble them into what should be the world's best automobile. What happens? Nothing, because the parts do not fit together [1].

The performance of an organization depends not on the interactions of each unit, not their individual actions. Management's challenge is to create an environment where interactions are encouraged and supported [1].

One of the main lessons from Eli Goldratt's book, The Goal, is that sub-optimization of non-critical elements is absolutely necessary to reach top performance. Management must learn to stop emphasizing efficiency, encouraging every operation to do it's best. In an optimal system the workers do ONLY what is necessary for success [11].

Managing in that kind of environment requires that management turn their former attitudes and practices completely around.

Here's what Donald Petersen, former chairman of Ford Motor Company told his managers when he set the goal of applying Deming's quality principles at Ford.

"It can be very difficult to make significant changes, especially when you have been in the habit of doing things differently for decades, and especially when the very success that brought you to the positions you now hold was rooted in doing some things, the wrong way. It's going to be hard for you to accept that you were promoted for the wrong reasons a time or two.

"So I urge you to ask yourselves, do you really understand what it is we are trying to change." [18]

KEY FACTORS SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIC PLANNING

This section covers our learnings about the characteristics that are associated with successfully planning and implementing strategic plans.

Successfully implementing a strategic plan is a major challenge. Our literature search showed that management has to go through tremendous changes in order to be successful during their strategic planning process. We categorized these into TWO broad areas that overlap:

- Prerequisite factors
- Development factors

PREREQUISITE FACTORS

Prerequisite factors mean, *"If you can not do these, don't go any further!!"*

In a presentation in class, Boeing president Phil Condit, identified the following critical factors for success in today's environment:

- Leadership--Management Commitment
- Communications, Trust and Integrity
- Teamwork--everyone working for a single purpose

These are the factors that we believe are absolutely fundamental.

Leadership

The role of management leadership in the implementation of a strategic plan cannot be overemphasized. Management must lead the effort and be totally committed. This commitment goes far beyond annual talks to employees and reports to shareholders.

The implementation of an organization's strategic plan requires an emotional internalization of the plan by management. Managers must want to affect the changes that the strategic plan requires. Their actions have to indicate that there is a deep, strong belief in what they are doing. When this is done, the strategic plan becomes the driving force for the organization.

Steel describes the barriers to success in implementing strategic plans to neither the quality of the plan, nor the activities of the people at the lower level. He says a major barrier is management's short attention span in supporting a new program [23].

W. Edwards Deming, the American who taught the Japanese about quality, is a forceful proponent of management commitment. The first of Deming's 14 points—constancy of purpose, asserts that it is management's responsibility to maintain stability of purpose [5].

HP CEO Lewis Platt, in a recent Business article, describes his role as, "...encouraging discussion of the white spaces, the overlap and gap between business strategy." [3]

Communications--Trust Integrity

Boeing president Phil Condit believes that management's challenge is to transfer knowledge between people and departments. He believes that team performance is optimized by bringing highly motivated people together.

Goodstein says that much of the resistance to any change effort comes from misunderstanding or, at least, not understanding. Therefore it is important to devote significant energy to inform team members of what is expected of them. The team members need a road map that will help them to identify: where they are in the process, where they have been and where they are going [12].

Even though there is no generic prescription on how to develop effective communications and trust that will fit every corporate culture, there are some steps that most companies can take to prepare for the changes that lie ahead.

Communication must be interactive. Serious problems can occur when a company is unprepared for communications of a major change. This lack of preparedness can be extremely costly in terms of poor results and unnecessary expense. Treating communications as an afterthought can also negate months of prior work devoted to redesigning a benefit plan.

Any major change should therefore be announced with an honest and forthright explanation of the reasons for it. Neglecting to explain the reasons for the company's action can fuel employee resentment, rather than acceptance, of change.

Wooten describes the multidimensional conditions necessary for interpersonal trust in organizations. Given that restructuring frequently results in job loss and violation of the psychological contract with employees, continued trust must be addressed through integrity, openness, consistency, and promise fulfillment. Strategic internal alliances will be formed only when management and the new system are trusted [26].

We believe that communications, integrity and trust are vital. Accomplishing these within the organization will make the transitions successful and effective.

Teamwork -- Involvement and Empowerment

Involvement of employees at all levels as well as involvement of management, suppliers, consultants, customers and distributors is very critical in strategic planning. Boeing president, Phil Condit emphasizes the importance leadership in teamwork saying that the leader should inspire, to coach, remove barriers, and listen effectively [4].

It is important for organizational sub-units and individuals to be committed to implementing and accomplishing the strategy. Solidifying organization-wide commitment to putting the strategic plan in place is typically achieved via motivation, incentives, and the rewarding of good performance. The skill is to inspire employees to do their best and to be winners, giving them in the process a sense of ownership in the strategy and a commitment to make it work [12].

Each employee and manager must have a full understanding of the daily imperative for implementing organizational strategy. It requires commitment and motivation to carry out the process successfully.

Steel says that this is beyond communications - it requires involving both management and employees in the formation of the strategies and in development of initiatives to implement them. Management will need to involve its employees to a much greater extent, involve them to act and to make the specific day-to-day decisions that will enhance service delivery, support customer needs and improve customer relationships [23].

HP CEO, Lewis Platt sees himself as a bridge maker between the companies various operations [3].

Jeffrey Gandz captures the essence of the concept of empowerment. Gandz says, "Empowerment means that management invests decision-making or approval authority in employees where, traditionally, such authority was a managerial prerogative." [9]

If you have satisfied all the requirements outlined above in the Pre-requisites section, it is now time to move to the action step.

DEVELOPMENT FACTORS "Go ahead, just do it."

This sections covers what we call the action steps. After a firm applies the principles in pre-requisite section, they can move to implementation.

There are four broad implementation parts:

1. Be flexible.
2. Renew existing systems.
3. Keep up with trends.
4. Measure yourself against the outer environment

Be flexible

Flexibility is the ability to adapt the inner environment to the changes in the outer environment. It's the ability to exploit opportunities emerging from the environment. Gary Hamel, co-author of Planning for the Future, sees changes as opportunities that flexible businesses can exploit. He says, "The current business climate is good for daring companies that are not afraid of being unconventional and attacking the status quo." [13]

A firm's current success does not guarantee future success. Customers are changing, the market place is changing, competitors are changing, technology is changing. Wise firms understand that their strategic plans must be flexible.

The purpose of strategy is to change, and the change cannot be accomplished in an rigid organization.

Flexibility is vital. According to Glanz, nothing can replace flexibility and a good business sense to meet the fast-paced cycles in high-tech businesses [10].

One of the biggest advantages of being flexible is that it encourages coordination and commitment at all levels throughout the organization. The flexibility helps mobilize commitment to diagnose the problems, foster consensus for the new vision, spread revitalization to all departments, and adjust strategies in response to problems in the revitalization process [25].

Renew existing systems

Often, management fails to implement strategic plans because they use existing systems. Pellegrinelli and Bowman described how senior managers spend a great deal of time developing strategy only to find very little change occurs. The original objectives are dissipated as the strategy moves into implementation, and the initial momentum is lost before the expected benefits are realized. This failure to implement strategy is often a result of senior management trying to use the organization's existing systems and structure to change the status quo [17].

In the second case study in our course, we read about how GE successfully implemented computer integrated manufacturing. The authors pointed out that most automation projects are failures because of management's attempt to automate their existing systems. The article showed how necessary it is to evaluate the entire current processes and be flexible enough to change them [21].

One of the ways that firms renew their existing systems is through redesign. Why have some U.S. firms succeeded in redesigning themselves to meet competitive demands while others have not? Successful firms meet three key requirements for effective redesign:

- A commitment to total redesign as a must, not simply an ought.
- A clear strategic vision supported by structure and processes.
- A managerial philosophy that fits the chosen strategy and structure.

There is no one "right" way to do this. Some firms have been able to install an alternative strategy-structure-process package by breaking completely from the established pattern. Other firms have "rediscovered" a viable combination of strategy, structure, and philosophy by stripping away central bureaucracy. Still others have searched outside familiar models.

Overall, the capacity for organizational renewal comes from investing in human skills and knowledge-bases, which serve as competency reserves in changing times. [16]

Keep up with trends

The outer world is continually changing. Management must be alert to any changes in its external environment, industry, and competition. They know that there are enormous opportunities and threats when change occurs. They know that the one fatal response to change is to do nothing.

Continually monitoring the environment is especially important during the early stages of implementation. This often occurs when the organization is preoccupied and may neglect its environmental monitoring. [12].

Changing organizations is tough!! What is important is that committed and massive action to be expended to fight the familiarity syndrome. Effective management knows this and does not suffer from the misguided belief that changing an organization is easy.

Tom Long illustrated this in a talk to our class when he described how Bob Galvin, former chairman of Motorola resorted to extreme actions to get his management team to understand his commitment to changing Motorola's quality practices [15].

Galvin gained top management's commitment to quality. He placed quality as the first item on the monthly agenda. When the quality discussion was finished, he left the meeting.

Without doubt, an organization's climate and culture play important roles in its overall success. In fact, climate and culture are powerful psychological mechanisms through which managers communicate their priorities to employees. There are three priorities that have a high probability of leading to organizational effectiveness:

1. Quality service provided to both external and internal customers.
2. Innovation in the research, development, and marketing of new products and services.
3. Good citizenship.

Focusing on any one of these and not on the others would be insufficient [19].

Bantel suggests that top management must establish a fit between the organization and its environment. She says that this task involves continuous and conscientious monitoring of the firm's external conditions to determine whether strategic changes are necessary or not [2].

Measure yourself against the outer environment

No strategic plan and no scheme for strategy implementation can foresee all the environmental changes and problems that will arise. Making adjustment and mid-course corrections are, therefore, a necessary part of strategic management.

Progress in implementing strategy requires measurement of the key elements and the key initiatives. One is reminded of the importance attached to performance measurement in quality programs, such as Total Quality Management. For example, if an organization is implementing a fast response standard on service delivery, measuring time to deliver the service, the quality of service and the level of customer satisfaction must be built into the system [23].

CASE STUDIES

This section describes some "real-life" experiences that demonstrates the application of the key factors.

WAL-MART

This case illustrates WAL-MART's strategy and implementation through involving employees and suppliers, understanding customers needs and desires, working effectively in teams and organizational flexibility. Note: the key points are underlined in the case description.

WAL-MART has made Fortune's list of the 10 most admired corporations several times. Few companies can match WAL-MART'S revenue growth of over \$65 billion in 14 years.

WAL-MART's strategy can be summarized as low everyday price, wide selection, big percentage of name-brand merchandise, a customer friendly store environment, low operating costs, disciplined expansion into new

geographic markets, innovating merchandising, and customer satisfaction guarantees. For example, outside of every WAL-MART store in big letters is the message: We sell for less.

WAL-MART puts heavy emphasis on foraging solid working relationship with both suppliers and employees, paying attention even to the tiniest details in store layout and merchandising, capitalizing on every cost-saving opportunity, and creating a high performance spirit. Unlike WAL-MART, many large companies suffer from stalled growth because there are too many management layers, a lack of internal communication and unwillingness or inability to change.

HEWLETT-PACKARD

This case shows how Hewlett-Packard applies the principles of involvement, empowering employees, teamwork and keeping up with trends.

Hewlett-Packard's strategic planning process is to transfer ownership of the strategy to every member of its organization. This ensures that the developed strategies are attuned to the business environment and opportunities while attaining speed and focus.

As a support to this strategy process, a structured framework that includes a variety of tools is employed guaranteeing that strategies are monitored, changed, communicated and adjusted at regular intervals. This framework also influences the development of an integrated corporate strategy.

Formulation of strategy is considered a constant learning process at HP, supported by a structure and culture that fosters change and continuous learning. Cross-functional and process-oriented teams expedite the strategy formulation and implementation process by enhancing the quality and span of their knowledge base [7].

SHELL

This case illustrates the importance of involvement, commitment and team work.

Shell emphasizes team learning throughout their strategic planning and implementation processes. With line executives in charge of both planning and implementation, learning and acting become inextricably linked. When it's time for a review of the planning effort, the team is highly motivated to understand the reasons for failure or success. This puts a premium on open communication and discourages defensive behavior. As more and more of these groups succeed, Shell is increasingly focusing on it's managers' need to be recognized and rewarded for all the innovation and risk taking the new planning process requires [20].

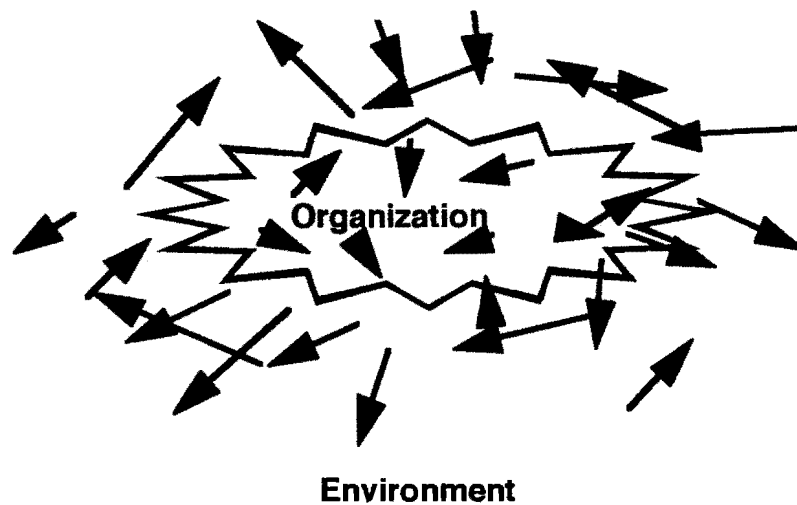
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Successful strategic planning is a stochastic process not a deterministic one. Our recommendations will increase a firm's probability of achieving successful strategic plans.

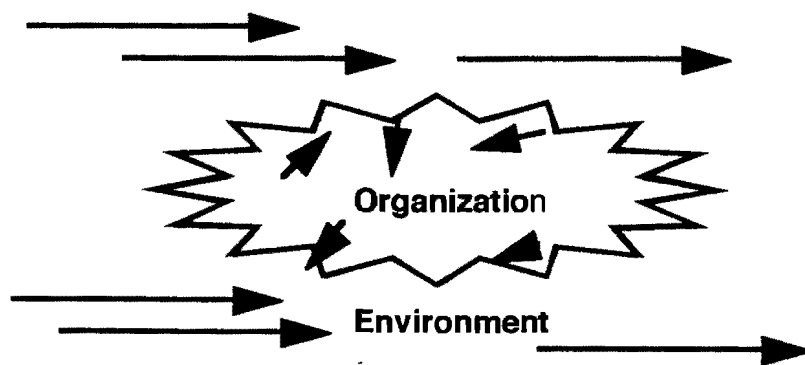
- Management must actively lead the effort.
- Management must foster an environment of open communications, trust, teamwork and integrity.
- Management must be flexible, and keep up with trends. There is no one right way, things continually change.
- Management must renew existing systems.
- Management must measure performance against the outer environment.

We developed five figures to summarize our findings.

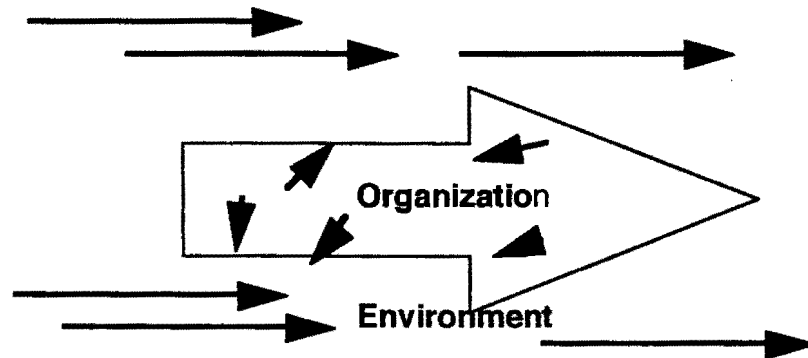
The first figure represents an organization and its environment in a chaotic state. Management is responsible for creating order.



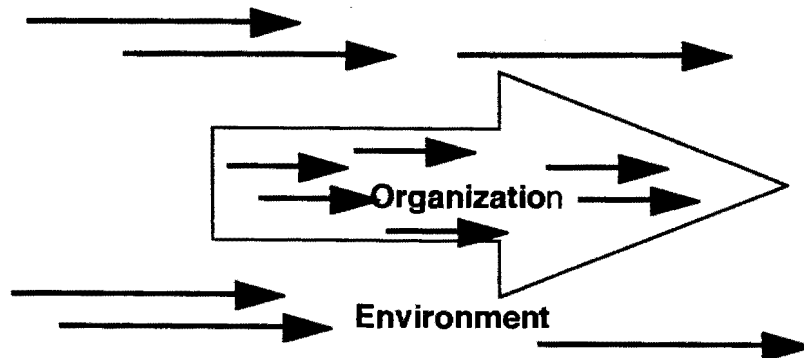
The second figure, below, represents what happens after management gets outside its organization to learn from the environment. The straight arrows represent the mental pictures formed after intensely studying the environment. They do not mean that management controls the environment.



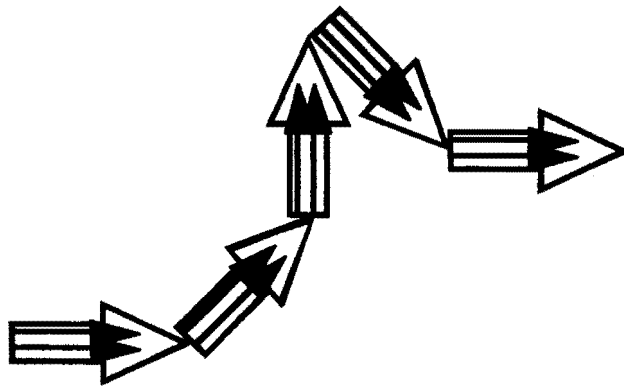
The third figure represents the outcome of management leading an "outside-in" strategy planning process. The shape of the organization changes from a random figure into an arrow. This represents the formulation of a strategy. However, within the organization there is still chaos.



The fourth figure represents what happens as management communicates the plan and establishes involvement and commitment.




The final figure shows that this is a never ending process. The cycle continues and continues. The Japanese call this Kaizen or continuous improvement.



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**STRATEGIC PLANNING
AND
IMPLEMENTATION**

KEY FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

Team 1

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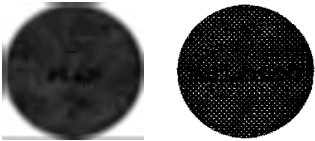
Team 1

WHAT IS SUCCESS

- 1. "Success" and "Failure" are dynamic and cyclical.
- 2. Creating success requires non-traditional thinking.

Team 1

**KEY FACTORS FOR
SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIC PLANNING**



TRADITIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING

Team 1

**KEY FACTORS FOR
SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIC PLANNING**



NEW STRATEGIC PLANNING

Team 1

**TOP SEVEN FACTORS
TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS THROUGH STRATEGIC
PLANNING**

- 1. Leadership and Management Commitment
- 2. Communication, Trust and Integrity
- 3. Teamwork, Involvement and Empowerment
- 4. Flexibility
- 5. Renew Existing Systems
- 6. Keep up with Trends
- 7. Measure Yourself Against the Outer Environment

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PREREQUISITE FACTORS
“If you can not do these, don’t go any further”



- 1. Leadership and Management Commitment
- 2. Communication, Trust and Integrity
- 3. Teamwork, Involvement and Empowerment

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DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION FACTORS
“Go ahead, just do it”



- 4. Flexibility
- 5. Renew Existing Systems
- 6. Keep up with Trends
- 7. Measure Yourself Against the outer environment

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ENVIRONMENT, ORGANIZATION AND EMPLOYEES ARE IN CHAOS



Team 1

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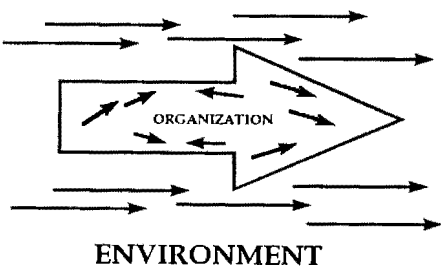
UNDERSTAND YOUR ENVIRONMENT



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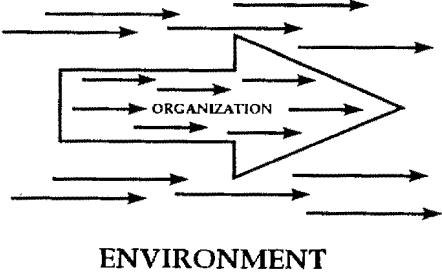
DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY USING “OUTSIDE-IN” APPROACH



Team 1

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COMMUNICATE YOUR STRATEGY



Team 1

**STRATEGIC PLANNING AND
IMPLEMENTATION
IS A NEVER ENDING PROCESS**



Team 1