



Mastering the Context

“I have a serious problem. My productivity is down, customers are complaining about quality, and the staff morale is at an all-time low. I told my guys, ‘If you don’t turn things around, I’ll get someone in here who will.’”

“Eric, it sounds to me as though you’re the problem.”

“What do you mean, I’m the problem?”

“Eric, your employees tell me they are afraid of you.”

“Fear can be a good thing. It keeps them on their toes.”

“Fear-motivation does work, Eric, but not very well. It never lasts and you don’t get the best out of people, particularly if you continually shout and threaten them with their jobs.”

“I don’t do that!” Eric shouted, acting out the very thing he just denied.

“Not consciously,” I said empathetically. “But there are things that you do that cause people to fear you.”

“What things . . . ?”

“Like saying, ‘If you want to keep your job, you better not mess up this order.’”

“Chris, my business is not big enough to absorb costly mistakes. I have to make sure that everything runs perfectly.”

“Eric, seeking perfection rather than excellence can be extremely stressful for you and your team.”

“Tell me about it,” said Eric.

After an awkward moment of silence, Eric asked, “What needs to be done, and what do I have to do?”

“Great! We need to start with you. You will need to shift your thinking, which isn’t easy. See yourself as a well-seasoned coach taking over a team that needs rebuilding and training, and you want to get them into a championship playoff.”

“That’s what I’ve always wanted!”

“Good! You have to help your team learn to be a team. Allow your guys to learn from their mistakes. Mistakes are critical coaching platforms that continuously reduce margins of error. Learning from mistakes boosts confidence and ability, and the team is strengthened—all within a positive guided environment. We need to convert your

stressed-out employees into a synergized team of focused go-getters willing to work with you toward a shared destiny.”

“Okay, how do we get started?” he asked.

“You begin by sharing your vision with them. What success looks like to you. What you want and how they can be a part of it. Then we will ask them to create their own vision as it relates to their department and specific job. We want the entire team to see themselves being successful in their jobs. We will then meld their collective visions with yours, into one, by conducting a bottom-up, company-wide vision exercise. The feedback from this exercise will be revealing and highly motivational. The goal is to achieve a psychology of shared destiny.”

Many CEOs, presidents, and business owners find themselves in similar situations as Eric. It’s as if they are stuck in a state of stressful inertia: repeating the same mistakes over and over and not knowing how to become unstuck.

The Synergy Strategic Planning Model is a transformational force that shifts thinking and releases stuck brainpower and energy. It moves an organization away from inertia, lethargy, sameness, and the “blame game,” to motivation, growth, and profitability.

Synergy Strategic Planning

The difference between Traditional Strategic Planning and Synergy Strategic Planning is within the depth and breadth of the managerial leadership focus. In Traditional Strategic Planning, the process is completed at the top by the executive team. It is then committed to writing and, in some cases, wordsmithed by an advertising agency and then distributed down into the organization with orders to make the change happen.

In the Synergy Strategic Planning Model, the core principle is that organizational effectiveness is achieved through committed leaders who see the organization as a whole, and that change happens quickly through empowered individuals working in teams toward a shared destiny.

When companies decide to make change, they often overlook the important and vital ingredient that will make all the difference—involving their people in the process! They make the mistake of thinking that everyone will see the benefit of the change. They assume that everyone’s goals, aims, and wishes are aligned toward the mission. If you have ever experienced a merger gone wrong or been through any kind of organizational change, you would have undoubtedly experienced the resistance that many people have to change.

You cannot order change, like you order a pizza. Just because the board of directors says it should be so, does not mean that it will be so. Ordering change may work for some people but not for the majority. Making successful change happen in organizations requires a critical mass of agreement and support. That’s one of the key reasons and benefits of Synergy Strategic Planning.

Synergy Strategic Planning is a process of defining a company's mission, vision, and goals. It includes determining a set of core values, which strengthens the relationships between the leadership team, employees, customers, and suppliers. It is a blueprint of the way in which it chooses to do business. It acts as a business's moral compass.

Synergy Strategic Planning requires clarity of thought in determining the key factors for the success of a business by knowing and acknowledging its strengths and weaknesses, what opportunities exist, and what may be a threat to achieving success. It takes into consideration core competencies and core offerings, and is a business discipline that calls for strength of leadership, high-performance teamwork, and unshakable determined focus. There is nothing more powerful than a passionate team of people, willingly aligning their goals with the company mission and working toward a shared destiny. It is the energy source of success.

A Psychology of Shared Destiny

A psychology of shared destiny is a power source for growth and profitability. It is a leadership duty and management responsibility to inspire and empower everyone to share in a common vision, a clear set of values, and clearly defined goals. This can be a very difficult thing to accomplish because many leaders are stuck with a false idea of power and control. False power and control can be very intoxicating and hard to let go of because it's good to be king! To be feared! This way of being the king feeds the ego, the imagined self, and creates an illusion of power.

It takes a real shift in thinking and it takes strength of character and personal confidence in one's own ability to recognize that true leadership power is earned through honesty, competency, trust, and respect. You cannot lead others if you cannot lead yourself. You have to trust yourself enough to trust others, and in so doing, allow them to perform to their highest potential. This is a more noble way to be king! People love to work for and support secure leaders, and be a part of high energy organizations that afford them the opportunity to grow and develop.

Shared destiny is an essential piece of the success puzzle and a powerful financial engine. Trust between the executive team and the rest of the organization is without question one of the key ingredients to company-wide ownership of the mission.

Most people will not align themselves with bad business practices, executive greed, exploitation, verbal and emotional abuse, betrayal, and false promises. Avoid the mistake of thinking that employees will support any of these unethical practices under the disguise of being a team player.

Most people can read between the lines; they share thoughts, assumptions, and information at the speed of the Internet. In today's businesses, good, bad, assumed, and created news travels really fast. That's why constant and transparent information sharing is critical and vital to organizational change. Facilitating change should follow a set of ethical principles to build a bridge of trustworthiness for employees to walk over without fear.

Experienced consultants and “outside” change agents are invaluable, well-versed, and specialists in rapidly and successfully winning over the hearts and minds of a team. Change agents don’t want to captain the ship, they want to “pilot” it out of the harbor. A good captain of business recognizes and uses this talent to cost effectively move the organization forward, knowing that failing to prepare is preparing to fail.

A good leader knows that the difference between a high-performance team and a group of people lies in the following: the strength of the relationships, the work environment, the importance of the goal, and the personal and financial rewards. In a high-performance business team, these factors are stronger, more positive, and applied more often—resulting in increased productivity, reduced costs, and elevated revenues.

You Are in the Business of Directing Energy

A vision is a clearly-defined mind image of what the final picture of success looks like. It is a uniquely human ability to imagine and visualize in detail where we plan to end up. To visualize is the most powerful ability we have. When we focus on a specific vision, and we discipline ourselves to hold an image constantly, our bodies become energized to bring about the vision’s physical materialization. Imagination is the source of possibility and the foundation of probability. It is the playground of potential, where the seeds of greatness are sown and the power of belief begins.

Every day we draw great inspiration from the heroes of imagination who have come from every walk of life. The Wright Brothers, Einstein, Thomas Edison, Nikola Tesla, Alexander Flemming, Alexander Graham Bell, and Henry Ford imagined radios, televisions, telephones, computers, incandescent light bulbs, automobiles, aircrafts, highways, spacecrafts, and the Internet—and like Martin Luther King, most of them were incorrectly told to stop dreaming about the impossible. Yet, their dreams have proved to be more powerful than the impossible.

Dreams are always more powerful than the impossible!

Writing out a vision statement is fine-tuning the imagination and transporting it into the realm of reality. It’s realistic dreaming and is an integral part of a strategic plan.

Equally as important as the vision are the supporting values and goals. Core values form the foundation, behavior, and personality of a business. Core values define and guide the business, allowing employees to identify with the larger purpose: what it stands for and who it serves. Values support the way people and teams communicate with one another and how they build organizational culture. When values are chosen wisely and practiced diligently, a climate of trustworthiness is built between management and staff. This inspires willing attitudes and teamwork. A good strategic plan recognizes that a high-performance team culture incorporates these core values, which is a distinct and powerful competitive advantage.

The business world thrives on high energy, enthusiasm, ideas, and innovation. Ideas and innovation are the lifeblood of business—but the execution and achievement of goals, its energy source. Without clearly defined, written-out, step-by-step goals, a

business runs out of gas. New products, solutions, concepts, and the best and most well-intentioned plans will fail consistently without accountability and goals.

Uncontrolled and misdirected enthusiasm is dangerous.

Leadership is in the energy business. Enlightened leadership teams are committed to the idea that a good strategic plan and the organizational culture are the primary operational driving forces in a business. This does not discount the importance of good systems and processes. A Synergy Strategic Plan takes into account the entire organization: all the internal and external influencing factors like the culture, people, systems, policies, resources, and leadership ability to succeed. Leadership commitment is an essential piece to the success of any change and improvement process (see Figure 1).

When we treat each other with dignity, respect, and efficiency, we create a culture of cooperative high performance, which ripples out to the customer. Goals must be clearly defined but allow flexibility to respond to the dynamic forces of the marketplace.

The Synergy Strategic Planning Blueprint

Figure 1. The Synergy Strategic Planning Blueprint.

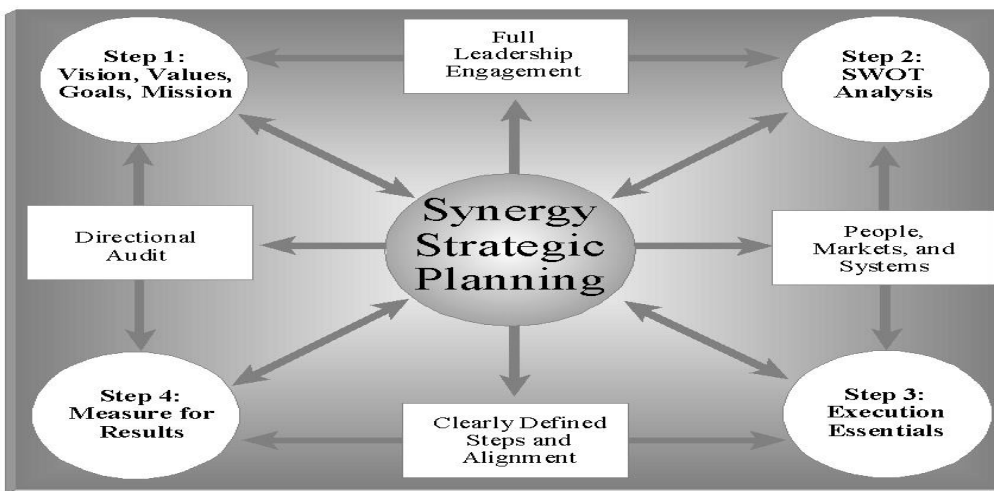
The four steps are:

Step 1: Creating an internal mission statement.

Step 2: The completion of a SWOT analysis.

Step 3: Determining the execution essentials.

Step 4: What gets measured gets done.



If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, one will meet with a success unexpected in common hours. HENRY DAVID THOREAU

What you have been reading thus far is an excerpt of our book:
Synergy Strategic Planning. We have included it as a handout for your enjoyment.
We would gladly love to gift this entire book to you during our first face-to-face
meeting. To schedule an appointment with us, please contact us at:

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