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Reasons For Goal Setting Failures

Activity ID: 398033
Title: Goal Setting Failures
Recertification Credit Hours Awarded: 3
Specified Credit Hours: Business

Training Outcomes:

By the end of this training, HR professionals will:

- Understand the pitfalls in planning goal setting strategies

Training objectives:

By the end of this training, HR professionals will be able to:

- Conduct Self-assessment to determine weaknesses in the goal setting process.

Topics Of Discussions

Agenda
Introduction
Failures
1. Mix-up
2. No Linkage
3. Data Gathering
4. Roles and Responsibilities
5. Lack Of Involvement
6. Lack Of Capable Process
7. Lack of Aligned Measures
8. Casual Consensus
9. Weak Key Words

Agenda
Failures
10. Failure to Blend Resources Into Core Competencies
11. Lack of Review Process
12. No Discipline
13. Drifting
14. Details First
15. Lack of Due Diligence
16. The Wild West
17. Musical Chairs
18. "Say What"
Strategic Planning Self-Analysis

Introduction

We have all sat through many strategic planning sessions that have been at best boring, poorly planned and executed, and had no follow-up to all the work that was done at the various sessions. Usually we leave strategic planning sessions frustrated and with less hope for the organization's survival then when we entered the session. Most of these strategic planning sessions are doomed from the outset because the planners have not adequately considered all of the potential pitfalls that could happen.

Recent research into the effectiveness of the strategic planning process in an organization indicates that only 25% of companies say they have an effective strategic planning process. Organizations are looking for innovative ways to improve this process since they recognize strategic planning is a necessary element of organizational success. These failures are presented here. At the end of this program is a self-assessment form for you to rate how your organization does today on strategic planning. This self-assessment can also be used as a checklist to plan for effective and productive strategic planning sessions in the future.

Failure #1: Mix-up

The mix-up occurs when an organization sets out to do planning. Long range planning or financial planning is often substituted for strategic planning. Strategic planning develops the intent of the organization, what it will be, where it is going, and long range planning determines how it is going to get there. Developing the Strategic Intent takes courage since you must stake out the future marketplace and then drive the organization to it utilizing your core competencies. It means understanding key customer requirements and matching organizational capabilities toward meeting those requirements. This is fundamentally different from long range or financial planning.

Frequently management has trouble deciding if they want a breakthrough path for the organization or if they want to tweak a set of operational measures for continuous improvement. Everyone wants and talks "breakthrough" but because of lack of focus or resources settles for small continuous incremental improvements. These small continuous incremental improvements never move or accelerate the organization so it can capitalize on a few big breakthrough gains that would help it leap frog its competition, realize substantial operating results, or develop new and innovative products for market leadership.

Failure #1: Mix-up

The strategic intent and long range planning mix-up also causes us to collect the wrong data to make decisions. Developing the strategic intent requires an ongoing effort to collect information about our marketplace, competition, and economic trends and changes that might shift our consumer's focus and needs. Long range planning to some is to review last year's operating results and then set unrealistic goals that are ten to twenty percent higher without making any changes in the existing infrastructure of the organization. Long range planning tends to keep our planning sights at too low of a level, and we get caught up in the day-to-day reasons why we cannot make change.

Devoting the time and the resources to developing a strategic intent gives the organization a lever that can be used to accelerate its business and marketplace successes. Developing the strategic intent is intended to be a process that involves teamwork on the part of the top executives of the organization and is not designed for individualism. The top of the organization must make fundamental decisions that will set the organization on a course for the future not bounded by the past or current problems or successes.

Failure #2: No Linkage

The strategic goals become lost in the middle of the organization. The problem is that the middle of the organization has no process to translate the strategy and goals into operational responses. Plans are developed at the top of the organization, but there is no automatic mechanism to deploy them effectively and link them to the processes that will be needed to deliver the results. No real action takes place; it takes longer and longer to get results, and there is frustration at the lack of progress both at the top and the bottom of the organization.

The employees in the organization feel isolated from the decision-making process since they are not able to participate effectively. They hear pronouncements from management that their ideas are valuable and wanted, but no one ever sets up a forum for them to deliver their ideas. At best a brainstorming session is held to see how many ideas can be generated to cut costs, and the department with the most ideas gets an award. These types of input sessions do not allow them to input to the direction of the organization. We tend to do episodic employee involvement on short-term issues and not the long term strategic ones where we really need to cultivate their commitment and ownership.

Failure #2: No Linkage

Developing the ability to deploy strategy and goals effectively to the middle of the organization is a process that requires executives to invest time and energy in communication. Executives need to clearly state and communicate what the goal is and what is expected in return and by when. They need to have a structured deployment process with trained facilitators to assist middle managers in developing their aligned operational plans. Then they need to do regular reviews to insure that the operational plans are aligned and delivering the expected results.

Attention to the details of the deployment and review process is what makes the strategy happen and the goals a reality.

Failure #3: Data Gathering

Data gathering is usually done at one of the following extremes:

- Too much irrelevant data
- Too little relevant data

In the data-gathering phase, organizations usually gather so much data that no one uses it or so little data that everyone involved in the planning process does not feel comfortable making a decision based on limited information, so they use their experience and opinion. When executives in a planning situation start using their opinion instead of data it often leads to making the wrong decisions.

The data-gathering phase of strategic planning is a crucial one. If we collect reams of market data and then do operational planning or we gather all the performance measures for a strategic planning session and do not find it useful, this is a clear indication that the data collection preceding strategic or operational planning needs to be focused on the purpose of the process or to inform the members of the planning team.

Failure #3: Data Gathering

We find too often that data is too old. The data is out of date before it is used. We find executives who have notebooks full of statistics and reports but do not know what to do with it. The best data we have found is that which challenges executives' opinions. This is usually the data that is overlooked and not utilized because it is controversial. Controversial data delivers the wrong message, not the politically correct one.

Failure #4: Roles And Responsibilities

Who does what in the planning process is a problem that we often encounter. Do the planners prepare the plan or provide data? Do the executives prepare the plan with the input of the planners? If there is no data management strategy in place then we usually collect reams of irrelevant data that are difficult to consolidate and usually have little bearing on the needs of the strategic planners.

An organization needs to invest the time and resources in establishing a small data and intelligence-gathering department to support the strategic intent, operational planning, and executive education effort. The purpose of this department is to monitor the economy, social trends, marketplace shifts, competitive position, product development efforts, and the overall performance of the organization. This group should also do selective benchmarking studies to focus on areas needing improvement. This group should prepare and deliver monthly and quarterly executive summaries showing the progress towards the strategy, goal deployment, and results achieved, and highlighting areas needing immediate attention.

Failure #5: Lack Of Involvement

A number of organizations today want to create the illusion that they have a participative structure and involve everyone in the decisions of the organization. What they really want is for everyone to be good soldiers and buy in to the top executive ideas without comment. They do not really want to hear any dissenting opinions.

Under the guise of open communication and consensus decision making, a chief executive will frequently decide to expand the strategy formulation group beyond his or her own direct reports. Attendees at the strategy work session should be limited to the small group that the chief executive can trust and has given major organizational responsibility. At times there will be an additional individual or two that the chief executive uses as a sage advisor or expert that may be used to counsel the strategy group. These individuals also can be included in the session to provide advice but not to set strategy. The role of these individuals has to be clear since they can sometimes be a disruptive influence to the overall group. In addition, anyone being invited in such a role should be fully briefed so they can make a meaningful contribution.

Failure #5: Lack Of Involvement

The purpose of the Strategy Meeting is to create a shared vision of the future among the executive team and not the sage advisors or trusted friends. The executive group then becomes responsible for the deployment of that vision to the rest of the organization and must have complete buy-in to it in order to make for meaningful deployment and attainable results.

Failure #6: Lack Of Capable Process

We often find that when the strategic intent is deployed, the lower level processes are not capable of delivering the operational results required to fund the future needs of the organization. Too often these lower level processes have been neglected for years and lack the appropriate infrastructure, equipment, people skills, aligned systems, and core competencies to develop and deliver the right product and services to the market when required. This inability to deliver on time and when needed to a customer base results in a slowing of the revenue stream to fund the future. This revenue slowdown usually results in further cuts in the lower level process, which continues the erosion of their ability to deliver the needed results. It is a vicious cycle that can be stopped only by focusing an organization on a redesign of its core business systems so they are aligned internally and externally to customer needs and expectations.

In order to do a redesign of an organization’s core business systems there is a need to have the strategic intent detailed out sufficiently so the redesign can be planned against it. An organization must clearly state what market it is going to be a player in, the stream of proposed products and services it envisions to be delivering, the timing of those deliveries, and the technology and people skills base that will be required to support the development and manufacturing efforts.

Failure #6: Lack Of Capable Process

Just redesigning core business systems without the benefit and alignment of the strategic intent is a waste of time and resources. Organizations that start redesign efforts in a vacuum soon fail, and the entire approach is given a bad name. It was not the approach that was at fault; it was starting without a concrete direction to align to.

If you do not know where you are going any road will get you there sooner or later. In the early 1990's everyone was jumping on the reengineering bandwagon as the next silver bullet for solving an organization's problems. This reengineering fad did far more damage to organizations than previous management fads since this one tinkered with or changed the major operating systems of the organization. Far-reaching changes were made in an organization's infrastructure without the benefit of a clear focus or direction. Some of these organizations cut their core competencies by mistake, and some used reengineering as a cover for layoffs. The reengineering process is a sound one when it is applied in conjunction with a clear strategic intent to refocus core business competencies.

Failure #7: Lack Of Aligned Measures

Measurement is rarely considered or mentioned as an essential ingredient of strategy development, deployment, or review. Organizations introduce new strategies and goals to achieve breakthrough performance but continue to use the same old measures to track progress. Seldom do they check and evaluate if the old measures are relevant to the new strategies and goals.

Measures to an observer of the strategic plan should be transparent to the strategic intent. Measures should encapsulate the strategic intent and provide for clarity and reduced confusion at lower organizational levels. This will facilitate alignment of operational plans to support and achieve the strategic intent. Aligned measures will also assist in the review process since it will focus the operational planning, and attainment of results will be obvious. Aligned measures also focus an organization’s continuous improvement efforts at the operational level so that they are aimed at those things that can help the strategy and the goals to be achieved and not focused on extraneous issues.

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Failure #7: Lack Of Aligned Measures

Measurement is sometimes feared since it promotes accountability. Accountability equates to responsibility for actions taken. Responsibility can have both positive and negative consequences associated with it. In the review process there must be a built-in mechanism to reduce the fear associated with measurements. The review process must seek to build up an individual’s ability to react quickly to measurement results and put action plans in place to correct any obvious deviations or undesirable trends.

Too frequently we measure things because they are easy to measure rather than because they are important to measure. It is easy to measure the number of sales calls made by a salesperson but more difficult to measure the effectiveness of those calls. Which of these two measures is more important to an organization? We must develop the discipline in managers and employees to seek and use quantitative measures over qualitative measures

Measurement makes things concrete, visible, and difficult to ignore. We must keep reminding ourselves that what gets measured gets managed effectively and efficiently. To manage effectively and efficiently we must measure!

Failure #8: Casual Consensus

Consensus is defined as a general agreement or accords that are a compromise of conflicting opinions. Consensus is difficult to achieve at times, but the investment in the time and energy to achieve it is well worth it for strategic planning. Consensus does not mean everyone agrees with every single point. Rather it means we can live with and clearly support the decision since it is best for the organization as a whole.

In many organizations they never achieve real consensus but rather casual consensus. Casual consensus or no real buy-in happens when the senior executives just give lip service to the strategic goals and objectives that they participated in developing. They pretend to agree at the meeting but communicate a different message when speaking to others in the organization or their functional areas of control. This type of senior executive behavior tends to project the image of a rudderless organization - not going anywhere fast. In addition other employees see it has a norm of operation. Agree to anything at a meeting then do as you please afterwards

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Failure #8: Casual Consensus

This type of behavior if not challenged by senior executives tends to lead to a clubby, paternalistic culture that avoids making tough decisions. This type of culture leads to at best a slow pace of change if any. Nothing ever seems to happen in this casual consensus atmosphere; the status quo is the norm, and we seek to maintain it. Sure we may challenge one another occasionally, but we do not have any teeth in the challenge. It’s for show only.

It is extremely important that the top few senior executives agree totally and support any strategic goals or statements before they are communicated to the rest of the organization. Buy-in must be obtained at the top before any meaningful deployment activities can begin. Invest the time and energy to obtain the top few senior executives to internalize and totally buy-in to the future direction of the organization.

Failure #9: Weak Key Words

Every organization has songwriters who love to attach as many modifiers to a goal statement as possible. These modifiers or jargon blunt any action statements of substance. Strategic goal statements should have an obvious clear intent as to the action that is required to accomplish it.

The addition of paraphrases intended to pacify influential parts of the organization usually makes the statement a disconnected group of paragraphs that no one in the organization can understand. There are usually contradictory statements buried within the paragraphs, and management spends a lot of time and effort trying to explain what they meant in the beginning.

Failure #9: Weak Key Words

The following is a list of Key Words that must be eliminated from any strategic intent, goal, or objective statements since they tend to make them not actionable.

- Alert
- Boundaryless
- Create
- Communicate
- Delayering
- Effective
- Efficient
- Encourage
- Engage
- Enhance
- Establish
- Impact
- Increase
- Independence
- Initiatives
- Introduce
- Leverage
- Maintain
- Manage
- Partner
- Position
- Presence
- Promoting
- Reach
- Recognize
- Reliable
- Respect
- Scoping
- Support
- Sustain

Failure #9: Weak Key Words

Strategic statements must be clear, bold, inspiring, and above all short and to the point. Strategic statements need to inspire the desired action with no confusion or misinterpretation as to what is wanted.

"Key Words" tend to make weak statements that at best inspire the maintenance of the status quo instead of the desired revolution.

Failure #10: Failure To Blend Resources Into Core Competencies

The blending of an organization's technology, people, skills, and other resources into a unique combination of market-differentiated products and services is a feat that many organizations do not perform well. This blending when linked and aligned to the strategic intent is a key ingredient for long term growth, profitability, and market leadership.

A business grows and prospers by having core competencies that are hard for the competition to imitate. These core competencies must not be isolated within one single function of the organization but must transcend the entire organization to provide maximum benefit. Core competencies are cross-functional in nature since they transcend individual functions. Core competencies usually are made up of a group of functional specialties that have many hand-offs to each other. Which core competencies to invest in and develop internally and which to outsource is a question that organizations constantly struggle with. We should invest in those that develop a proprietary capability in the organization and outsource those that are generic in the marketplace. In the virtual world of the next century, organizations need to invest in proprietary capabilities to maintain their competitive edge but outsource generic competencies to maintain profitability.

Failure #10: Failure To Blend Resources Into Core Competencies

Given that customer expectations are constantly shifting, an organization must be able to identify future customer requirements and align its resources and competencies to meet those needs. It is critical for the strategic plan to identify the gap between future requirements and current capabilities and to determine action steps to fill that gap. As customer needs and expectations shift so must an organization's core competencies.

An organization must be constantly monitoring, assessing, and measuring the efficiency, performance, and impact on the bottom line of their core competencies. Core competencies, like customer needs and expectations, must change over time to meet the needs of the marketplace, and successful organizations will be the ones that have appropriate monitors in place to detect the need to change ahead of the competition in the marketplace. The assessment and monitoring process keeps an organization alert to the shifts in the market place and protects it from market place insensitivity.

Failure #11: Lack Of Review Process

The word "Review" in most organizations is equated to fear, fear of punishment for results not achieved. Reviews are usually not pleasant experiences. Think of the many reviews you may have been subjected to over the years. The annual medical review, a tax review, a performance review, a fitness for duty review, a mid-term school review, and so on. We had fear in each one of them since we knew something would be said or discovered that would indicate we were headed for trouble or a discomforting experience. What we feared in these reviews as individual participants was reprisal for action taken or not taken. Usually the reviewer or senior management does not find the review process pleasant either since they chastise often and recognize seldom.

The purpose of "Review" should be to develop mutual agreement between management and process owners around objectives, goals, action, alignment, and timing. The current review process must be reengineered so it is one that is constantly providing clarity from the top to the bottom of the organization on:

• Expectations • Objectives • Achievements

Failure #11: Lack Of Review Process

This process of continuous clarity has an end result in developing a clear and concrete contract between management and process owners for the achievement of substantial bottom line results.

An effective review process allows senior management the opportunity to display the following exceptional traits of a great leader:

- Coaching
- Encouraging
- Empowerment
- Role Modeling
- Following Through
- Challenging
- Teaching
- Mentoring

Review is an integral part of insuring that aligned goals and objectives are achieved as rapidly as possible so that their benefit can be realized quickly.

Failure #12: No Discipline

Many organizations lack a disciplined deployment process to ensure that operational goals are aligned to the strategic goals and deliver the agreed to results. The lack of a disciplined deployment process leaves a void in an organization for operational units to determine how they can contribute to the strategic intent of the organization. A disciplined deployment and review process helps build commitment to direction and results.

The following four scenarios show what can happen when the strategic intent and deployment processes interact:

- If the strategic intent of the organization is focused and clear but the organization has an ineffective deployment process, paralysis sets in, and no action results.

- If the strategic intent is unfocused and the deployment process is ineffective, there is a lot of wandering and drifting at lower levels. There are a lot of unanswered questions, and each operating unit will take a different direction to further compound the misalignment.

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Failure #12: No Discipline

• If the strategic intent is unfocused but the deployment process is effective, there tends to be a lot of functional focus and a lot of the same old, same old plans. This scenario tends to promote the status quo and the functional stovepipes.

• If the strategic intent is focused and the deployment process is effective then an organization will experienced focused and aligned change. The organization as a whole will experience acceleration in its attainment of its goals and objectives.

In order to reduce the confusion in lower levels of an organization and speed up the acceleration of goal attainment, it is imperative that an effective deployment process must be supported by a focused strategic intent. The effective deployment process is one that has a few well thought-out process steps that guide an organization's actions to goal alignment. It must make provisions for corporate goal translation into local language and structure appropriate process improvement actions to achieve the goal.

Failure #13: Drifting

Drifting infects an organization when the top executives develop a short or long-term case of amnesia. These executives become clueless as to what are the core competencies of their business. They forget what business they are in and expand into areas in which they have no expertise or experience. There are many examples over the past ten years of organizations expanding into businesses foreign to their core competencies and then closing or selling these ventures at a loss a few years later.

Failure #13: Drifting

The Drifting pitfall is not usually a one time phenomenon but can be repeated many times in an organization that does not have the discipline to learn from its mistakes. Too often senior management jumps from disaster to another waiting to happen. Until an organization takes the time and energy to uncover its core competencies it will never know where the gold is buried in the organization. Once we understand our strengths then it is time to set the direction for the future. We must constantly monitor the assumptions on which the future direction was based to catch any fundamental change that would cause us to make a mid-course correct.

We can not be complacent after we set the future strategic intent. We must monitor, communicate, and update that intent to our employees on a regular basis and not at the last minute when the bottom falls out of the plan.

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Failure #14: Details First

Agreeing on details before deciding the main points happens occasionally when there is no strategic thinking involved. We tend to focus on the fix for a problem before we truly understand the root cause of it. We constantly come across organizations that have had hundreds of team-based improvements that really did nothing to enhance the long-term competitive position of the organization. These team-based improvements just made today a little more tolerable.

Before any organization begins to tinker with improvement, it must set a clear direction upon which criteria for success can be drawn. Individuals and teams in an organization need criteria of success to judge which of the many actions they could take to make daily work improvements that are the best suited and aligned to achieve the strategic direction of the organization.

Letting everyone figure out the details in the absence of a strategic direction is a recipe for disaster. There will be many conflicting improvements, some of which may even cost more than they save. Most of the improvements that come in a “details first atmosphere” are ones that are sub-optimum. They maximize a gain in one area at the expense of the organization as a whole.

Failure #14: Details First

In addition, in a "details-first atmosphere" many of the team-based or individual improvements recommended to management never get acted upon since management does not know which are the right ones to approve. Employees never hearing back on recommendation become disillusioned and resist any further attempts to involve them in making improvements.

Management should not expect great strides to be made in making an organization better at every level if they walk the talk of quickly finding a solution for every problem. Management must set the direction clearly for the future and then carefully craft a set of evaluation criteria that everyone in the organization can use to judge the worthiness of a proposed improvement. Improvement areas selected with criteria that tie it to the long-range needs of the organization will be readily received by all levels of management. Implementation of this type of improvement project is easier since there is a benefit to the whole and not just one part of the organization.

Failure #15: Lack Of Due Diligence

The lack of due diligence occurs when we try to rush through the necessary step of the strategic planning process by rushing and skipping steps and people's inputs in order to quickly craft a plan for a high level meeting. Under the guise of urgency we rush through to develop a plan that usually leaves its audience bewildered and trying to unravel all of the inconsistencies and contradictions.

The lack of due diligence happens when an organization does not view the strategic planning process as a core business process. By not viewing it as a core business process it tends to ignore the fact that the strategy drives the organization. Treating strategic business planning as a core business process requires an investment in time and resources to operate and fund the activity correctly. The strategic business planning process must be seen as a core process that has critical process levers that are focused on driving the organization to achieve competitive advantages.

Failure #15: Lack Of Due Diligence

By viewing strategic business planning as a critical core process we must subject it to the same measurement and standards that we impose on other critical processes. Work with the strategic business planning process must be performed efficiently and effectively. There must be a process of continuous improvement in place that constantly makes the process more responsive to the organization's needs. The strategic business planning process can be a value-added support process if it has a clearly defined process that all can view and provide input to at the appropriate time.

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Failure #15: Lack Of Due Diligence

One of the first improvements in an existing strategic business planning process is to insure that input and comments are gathered throughout the organization in an efficient manner. The strategic business planning process owners should focus on developing a simple process of communication, input, and feedback for the organization to use. They should communicate the first draft of the plan and the supporting assumptions to a series of focus groups at the next level and ask for input.

The input should be consolidated and reviewed by senior management, and decisions should then be made regarding modification of the draft plan. Then feedback sessions should be held with the original input groups to show the modifications and why certain suggestions were or were not used. Then the process can be repeated at other levels as required. This will insure that due diligence has been achieved. This process also has a side benefit in that it develops ownership for the plan early on.

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Failure #16: The Wild West

Every planning meeting is like the gunfight in the Wild West. We all stake out our territory and shoot from the hip with no real data to back up our accusations or assertions. We wear any attacker down by a constant barrage of meaningless opinions, and when we are challenged we attempt to table it until we can get more ammunition.

The classic quote to describe this failure is “ready, fire, aim.” We keep shooting until our opponent capitulates or it is past 5 P.M. and everyone agrees to a cease-fire.

What is interesting in this failure is how fast the sides change during the shoot-out. As soon as my turf is violated I quickly look for an ally, and it could be the one I was ganging up on. One minute I am backing up “Doc Holiday,” and the next minute I have him in my gun sight.

Failure #16: The Wild West

No one had time to write anything down since they were too busy reloading their gun, firing, and ducking for cover.

The gun fight usually ends with each participant making up a “To-Do-List” of who to get even with and possible areas to find data to discredit someone with. Unfortunately this type of a meeting does nothing to build unity toward any common goals or purpose within the organization. Bitter resentment on the part of some participants can result in hostile internal power struggles that are destructive to an organization.

Both of the authors have experienced the aftermath of this type of meeting process if it is allowed to exist in an organization. The result is it gets quickly deployed throughout the organization and becomes the norm for conducting business. In addition it has a paralyzing effect on the decision, teaming, and consensus process.

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Failure #17: Musical Chairs

We have all seen the major announcements from corporate how this year's strategic planning process will be more efficient, streamlined, and focused on the business we need to be in for the future. With this major announcement comes the names of those on the new team to lead this strategic planning effort.

We always notice that this new team is part of the reorganization that was just completed to give the organization a leaner look, but what is new is the titles of the players, nothing more. The same old lead weights that brought us last year's new strategic planning fiasco have just played musical chairs. The same old crew is still there. Once again they have shown their resiliency to survive in the worst of times. The worst part is that they are more experienced at screwing it up so the results this year should be spectacular. We can hardly wait for the first draft of the new process.

Failure #17: Musical Chairs

Leaders in organizations have never learned the lesson that to expect something different out of the same old gang is insanity. You can mix them up, slice and dice, and rotate them but the result is always the same. I wonder why?

We need to bring fresh blood and ideas into the strategic planning and deployment process each year. Leaders have to constantly evaluate their executive team to insure that they are functioning effectively and not just surviving.

Giving a person a new title does not change the way they think, act, and behave. This has to be done through a thorough performance management and planning system. Leaders must identify the shortfalls in their executive team and address them through training, experience, and coaching. Leaders need to prevent ineffective executives from polluting the planning process and detracting from its effectiveness.

Failure #18: “Say What”

Many organizations today are having severe difficulty in deploying their strategic plans effectively and in a timely manner. Due to the large scale amount of downsizing and right sizing many organizations have eliminated the core of the middle management team that used to serve as translators of the strategic plan. They could talk “Operational Speakese.” They made sense out of the grand strategic language. These translators played a vital role in the organization, which has been overlooked in the rush to slash and burn. Unfortunately nothing was developed to fill the void left by these individuals.

Failure #18: “Say What”

To overcome this void, it is imperative that Strategic Realization Workshops be held in the organizational units to help translate the strategic plan into operational plans with defined outcomes and timelines. A conscious effort needs to be made today to support the organization in taking a set of strategic goals and translating them into ongoing aligned operational plans. If top management does not take the initiative to translate to “Operational Speakese” their thoughts and desires then the void will continue to widen, and operational execution mistakes will increase, dragging down the whole organization. We do not want our organization playing the time-consuming game of “What Do You Think They Want.” This is a waste of resources and ultimately leads to failure.

Just like in the foreign movies we need to add the subtitles.

Test Questions

1). What should you do to reduce the confusion in lower levels of an
2). Why is measurement sometimes feared?
3). What is meant by giving Lip Service to the development of strategic goals?
4). What is meant when the lower levels are not capable of delivering on the processes?
5). What is the result of using old measurements to measure new goals?
6). What occurs when the middle organization has not process to translate goals ?

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Strategic Planning Self-Analysis

Instructions: After each of the Failures check the appropriate column as it applies to your organization - It is Always there, Sometimes we have the problem, and Never in this organization. Multiply the "Always" column number of checkmarks by 1, the "Sometimes" number of check marks by 3, and the "Never" number of check marks by 5. The highest score is 150 which is a world class strategic planning organization.

Failures	Always	Sometimes	Never
1. Mix-up			
2. No Linkage			
3. Data Gathering			
4. Roles and Responsibilities			
5. Lack Of Involvement			
6. Lack Of Capable Process			
7. Lack of Aligned Measures			
8. Casual Consensus			
9. Weak Key Words			

Failures	Always	Sometimes	Never
10. Failure to Blend Resources Into Core Competencies			
11. Lack of Review Process			
12. No Discipline			
13. Drifting			
14. Details First			
15. Lack of Due Diligence			
16. The Wild West			
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Include your:

1) Name:
2) Your HRCI ID#
3) Email Address used to register for the program. Test submissions must be received from the email used to register!
4) Activity ID: 398033
5) Sponsorship ID:

There is no partial credit awarded for incomplete test answers!