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## **Power Choices© June 2008**

### **Power Choice – Strategy**

#### **What is Strategy?**

(According to **Webster**)

1. a.: Careful plan or method; b: The art of devising or employing plans toward a goal
2. An adaptation or complex of adaptations (as of behavior, metabolism, or structure) that serves or appears to serve an important function in achieving evolutionary success

#### **Why is Strategy important?**

Strategy serves as the framework for ideas and concepts that will support the pursuit of great endeavors and lead to extraordinary results. Strategy, although originally had been viewed as a military term, now has come to be considered a universal term. Artists use strategy. Engineers use strategies. Physicians, lawyers, nurses, teachers... Can you see the value?

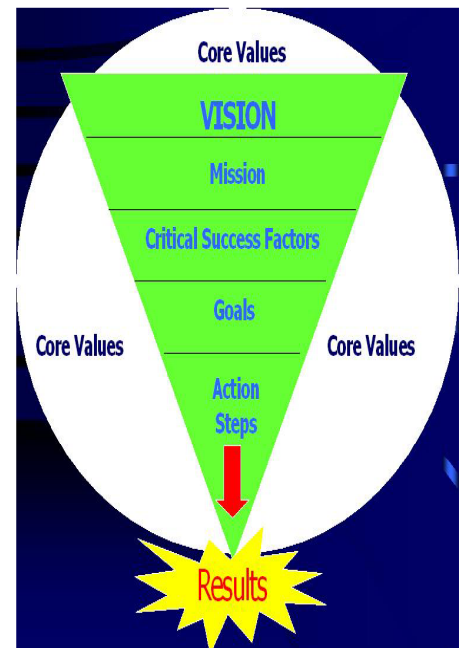
#### **How can we create a successful Strategy?**

The best way to create a strategy is to find a model. In 2001, Linda Martin, CEO of Resources Associates Corporation and Dr. David Mutchler, President of Leadership Development Systems wrote a leadership book called **Fail-Safe Leadership**. This book serves as a great source for a model for strategy:

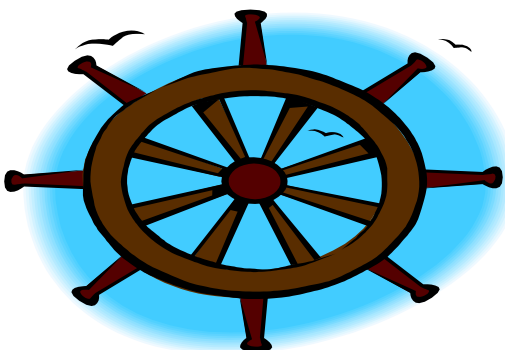
- ◇ *Align vision with strategy, people and processes to get results!*
- ◇ *Define Mission and Critical Success Factors based on your vision.*
- ◇ *Link Goals and Action Plans such that virtually everything that happens works purposefully towards your vision's achievement.*
- ◇ *Get results consistently!*

**"When you're prepared,  
you're more confident.  
When you have a  
strategy, you're more  
comfortable."**

Anonymous



Source: Fail-Safe Leadership by Linda Martin & Dr. David Mutchler



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**"What do you want to achieve or avoid?  
The answers to this question are objectives.  
How will you go about achieving your desired results?  
The answer to this you can call strategy."**  
William E. Rothschild,

**Strategy:  
Design Your Masterpiece!**  
Laura Novakowski

William E. Rothschild is a former executive from General Electric. In his role as Corporate Strategist, he created the first "market driven Corporate **Strategy**." Using this approach, according to Rothschild, GE for the last two decades has consistently had been described as having "the best inventors, the best **strategic** planners, and the best results."

Whether we are planning a trip to the market, a vacation, a day at work..., we are always has to quote Stephen Covey "an end in mind." Now that "end" may be fill the refrigerator, plan for vacation, deliver the product or service. While that certainly gives us some kind of results, are they the best results? Are you exhilarated with the results you're getting? Can you see the value of identifying the results you want and then filling in the picture, rather than the other way around?

I'd like to share with you another great **strategist**, Michaelangelo. For me, he depicts a highly focused professional who valued quality and achieved amazing results. When Michaelangelo worked, he clearly used **strategic** thinking and planning. When asked how he could carve such beautiful statues, his reply was, "it's already in there." He saw the results prior to even lifting his tools to work. Now I can't believe that someone as passionate about as he was *just banging away* at some granite and then coming up with Moses – one of his finest sculptures.

Let's imagine this great artist's process. First, he saw the granite. He considered form, structure, faults and strengths. Slowly a vision and mission came to mind and Michaelanglo could start planning his approach to achieve his results. Next, he determined what was critical to creating his product. What tools did he required? Where would he do the work? Who might assist him (moving granite might take some help)? What would it cost in time, money and energy? Yet, he still had not raised a chisel, for if he did, I'm sure that would have altered his results.

After he thought about his overall **strategy**, vision, mission and critical results, he next set goals. Goals, that are **results focused**, are much more motivating and achievable. He knew exactly what he wanted and then he started his action plan – the hair, the eyes, the nose, the beard... All predetermined actions embraced his values. Michaelanglo envisioned beauty, integrity, passion, courage, commitment to high standards with incredible details. The results – a masterpiece!

The people, in my experience that are the most successful, the most energized, the most fulfilled, are the people who know their personal and professional vision. Why not strive for a masterpiece in your life? At the end of everyday, I see a masterpiece in everyone that I encounter. Engage a **strategy** that will help you to see and then achieve your masterpieces too!



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## **Strategy's Partner is Action**

*Leanne Hoagland-Smith, M.S.*

**"Don't hide your strategy under a bushel.  
Communicate it  
throughout your company."**

Joel E. Ross

Every day in Africa a gazelle wakes up and it knows it must outrun the fastest lion or it will be killed. Every day in Africa a lion awakens knowing that it must outrun the slowest gazelle or it will starve to death. Come morning, it doesn't matter whether you are a gazelle or a lion, you had better be running.

This short story epitomizes the ongoing challenge between **strategy** and its partner action. One of the most frequent and repetitive challenges for both organizations and individuals is the inability of organizations to simply take action. Just think about how much time is spent in meetings planning the **strategy**.

In speaking with a successful consultant who works with companies that fail to take action and he must come to help rebuild the organization's financials, he said that "70% of all consulting fails." This makes pretty good sense given the reluctance to not only take action, but to ensure that those actions are aligned to the overall **strategic** action plan and the subsequent goals.

One of my most favorite fact finding questions to determine where the performance gap or if you prefer the **inability to take action gap** is this:

*"If I were to ask all of your employees or a segmented population from top management to your front line workers to name the top 3 goals of the organization as they perceive them to be, would I get **exactly** the same 3 goals in the same order from each and everyone of your employees."*

The responses during the last 10 years have consistently been *"No, you would not get the exactly the same 3 goals and let alone in the same order."*

My follow-up question is simply: *"So what is all of these misdirected actions costing you in terms of resources from time, energy and money?"* Again, the response is usually *"I do not know, but probably more than I want to know."*

When **strategy** and actions are united in alignment with the overall vision, values and goals within current **strategic** action plan, then the current mission is far easier to achieve. This is called "working smarter and not harder."

One of the best books on how to unite strategy and goals is entitled *Fail-Safe Leadership* by Linda Martine and David Mutchler. In under 150 pages, these authors provide the template from which to begin to build an organization that will consistently secure the desired results.



Leanne Hoagland-Smith, M.S.

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## Strategic Success

Stephen Sisselman

Question for the Month: *What have you done over the past 6 months to ensure your strategic success?*

**Strategy** is the word that describes the plan one has as they move through a period of their life with a limited knowledge of the future, and based on only the information they have right now. **Strategy** is often used to describe the way people win at the game of chess. It's also used to discuss sporting events. And, without a doubt, **strategy** is always used in business. In chess, a person has to look at the board, and make a move based upon what he/she expects his opponent to do, without the knowledge of what he/she will actually do. In football, a coach prepares plans based on what he thinks the opposing team might be planning. As one gains experience in chess or in football, they begin to learn the patterns of their opponents and that can help guide them in making decisions that effect the outcome of their game. When watching a football or chess game one can see **strategy** in use relatively quickly, whether it works or not. However, in business, the time frames are expanded and as a result, it may take a little longer to see if a specific **strategy** works or whether another **strategy** could have worked better.

The **strategy** of a business begins at the top (wherever that may be in an organization, from a board of directors to a CEO to an owner of a small business). The person whose responsibility it is to make a business succeed is the one who begins the process of planning a **strategy**. It is often time called a strategic plan because it is the plan that the organizational leader uses to make an attempt at success. The plan is then fed piece by piece throughout an organization usually as the leader feels appropriate, by sharing it with other leaders who report to them. The strategic plan may contain specific goals for various departments and sub-departments that can develop into strategic plans at a different level. In any case, a business **strategy** starts with a goal, whether to double revenue in 2 years, to up production 50% in 1 year, to gain 5 new clients over the next 6 months, or any other goal a leader feels will bring their organization success.

The success of any **strategy** comes through how it is created. The values of the people and organizations involved are extremely important in implementing any **strategy** because values help define needs and wants. If you are in an organization that is struggling, it will be no surprise if you look around and see some questionable activities going on. If you are in a large organization, that actually defines its core set of values, it may not even feel as if those values are being followed. Values are not just present because they are written on paper or on a web page, they are present when every action every person involved with an organization works with them in their head as they make decisions on a day to day basis.

Someone, somewhere at sometime, created values for most organizations in today's world, many of us are lucky to work for such an organization that actually defines and lives them. If you ever feel stuck, or not sure how to act, remember this **strategy**: If one acts **with** the values of the organization one works in they are always working towards the success of the organization. Values are at the **heart** of every **strategy**. Even if we do not know the particulars that the CEO or board-of-directors have in mind, if we work to follow the core values, we are ensuring strategic success.

**Make everyday a day to remember!**  
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## *Special Section*

### *Laura and Leanne*

So what is your business strategy? Much is written about the value of **strategic** planning. However what is missing in many cases are the goals for specific areas or critical growth goal categories within the plan. Your overall action plan should address these key areas.

1. **Core Foundational Statements** (Values, Vision, Mission)
2. **Tagline** to help with the branding of your business and showcasing how you are the Red Jacket in the Sea of Gray Suits
3. **Marketing Plan** with goals for Internet & Website; Networking, Tradeshows & Speaking; Direct Mail; Paid Advertising; Promotional Items; and Professional Development
4. **Sales Plan** with goals for Revenue; Time Management; Productivity; Continuous Learning; Self Leadership; and Personal Life Balance
5. **Customer Loyalty Plan** with goals for Referrals, Existing Customers; Policies & Procedures; New Customers; Lost or Inactive Customers; and Training & Development
6. **Management & Leadership Plan** with goals for Communication; Employee Retention; Department Initiatives; Team Building; Employee Productivity; and Succession Plan
7. **Growth & Innovation Plan** with goals for New Products; New Services; Market Place; Technology; Non-Technology; and Human Capital Development
8. **Financial Plan** with goals for Profitability; Total Revenue; Direct Costs; Indirect Costs; Labor; and Waste.
9. **Dashboard of Key Performance Indicators** that will quickly tell you whether your **strategies** and actions are delivering the results on a timely (usually weekly or monthly) basis

The year is almost half over. Now is the time to review your current action plans for your business and your own personal life. Determine what goals have been achieved, are nearing completion or have yet to be realized. Take action; schedule a weekly 30-minute to 60 minute appointment with yourself. Celebrate your successes and make those **strategic** course corrections so that in 6 months you will even have more successes to celebrate. Remember, it does not matter whether you are a lion or a gazelle, every morning you must wake up and start running.

### **More Strategy Quotes**

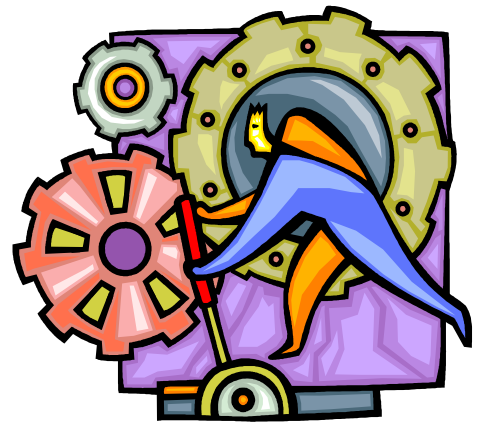
*"A satisfied customer is the best business strategy of all."*  
Michael Leboueuf

*"Who asks whether the enemy were defeated by strategy or valor?"*  
Virgil

*"You have to set the tone and the pace, define objectives and strategies, demonstrate through personal example what you expect from others."*  
Stanley C. Gault

*"defeat the enemies strategy"*  
Sun Tzu

*"However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results."*  
Sir Winston Churchill



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