
Developing Strategic Business Planning Skills: *A DIY Project*

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A Note from the Author:

Welcome to one of our two courses for developing strategic business planning skills. We offer two courses because there is so much material, not because you must take the first before you move on to the more advanced second. These are presented in a manner that you can easily apply in any organization of any size whether public, private, or non-profit.

As a course, it will take you into, over, and through a lot of what may be new information if you are an engineering or project management professional who has not had a lot of contact with the business side of your profession. This is a wide range of topics arranged together into a journey designed to help you see the organizational world around you from a high perspective - a seat at the lofty "Table" that everyone talks about.

We will help you understand how a "Strategic Planner" must look at events, situations, and participants around them so they can create, present, and follow a map that can take the organization from today into tomorrow. And not just follow the map alone like an explorer in the wilderness. Instead, they must take the rest of the organization on the journey, too. Sometimes taking them there involves acting as an internal consultant to other leaders and helping them prepare their employees for the journey to come.

I invite you to begin your journey from this hypothetical situation. I think it will help you understand the presentation of this material. It will help it flow more easily and be more engaging and useful for you.

Here we go:

Assume you are a very competent engineering or project management professional who has developed an excellent record in your technical field working for a mid-sized, family-owned company. Your boss is a nephew of the company owner and owes his position to kinship, not necessarily competence. You



have been there for 10 years doing an excellent job dealing with the daily tasks associated with your profession.

The company has been described as "solid, steady, but in no danger of setting the world on fire in its market". Just 10 days ago, the founder of the company, who has been President and CEO for the past forty years, finally succumbed to a lingering illness and passed away. His daughter, his only child and heir, was promoted from VP of Business Development into the top spot.

She went to a prestigious business school and has really brought the BD Department to life in the past eighteen months and it is clear she is a "hard charger with fire in her belly" to quote an observer.

Apparently she knows who actually gets things done in the operations area and calls you to her office late one afternoon. She thanks you for your years of dedication and hard work and asks if you are willing to create and fill a position in a different side of the company business - STRATEGIC PLANNER.

Although you really didn't know much about the concept, she briefly explained that you would be her in house "Strategic Planner" regarding organizational development issues associated with "shaking this company out of its rut and dragging it kicking and screaming into the 21st Century."

You accepted the assignment, new designation, and pay increase. So today, Friday, you leave the office as an engineer or project management professional and Monday morning you will come back in as the designated Strategic Planner. Suddenly, you have this frightening thought as it all begins to sink in....WHAT THE HECK DOES A STRATEGIC PLANNER DO?

We hope this course/manual is a valuable, educational, and practical experience for you. We wish you the best of luck on your journey. Please contact me through the website if I can help you solve some strategic thinking problems or you just want a sounding board to bounce some ideas off of.

Good luck...



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Course Overview

"Engineer/PMP to Strategic Planner" - WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? Is this just some way to rename the same old job to make it sound more important?

No, it is something very much different. Strategic business management planning encompasses issues that fall OUTSIDE of the traditional engineering or project management function and directly relate to the business of the organization such as:

- Business-related topics such as finance, marketing, employee relations, and information technology
- Topics related to the general business environment:
 - Industry practices and developments, technological developments, economic environment, and labor pool/demographic trends
 - Organization strategic planning, organizational budgeting, corporate social responsibility, corporate governance/ethics and due diligence for mergers and acquisitions
- Aligning human capital activities with the business plan such as:
 - Developing metrics to measure Human Resource's contributions
 - Integrating technology into Human Resource applications
 - Leadership development systems tied to organizational goals

The short explanation is a strategic planner plans for tomorrow while everyone else is dealing with today.

This course includes many Human Resource issues because of one very important fact that many strategic planning initiatives overlook: **acquisition, maintenance, and development of a productive workforce is the greatest expense of any business.** If you want to become an effective strategic planner for your organization, it is critical that you have a thorough understanding of the vital role played by your Human Resources group.

This do-it-yourself (DIY) manual will help a self-directed professional who wants to evolve from the day-to-day issues to eventually becoming a contributing participant at "The Table" helping the executive team's plan for the future become a reality.

Your journey to the Table using this manual will follow this path:

- Looking inward and helping you prepare for the long journey ahead (you did not think this would be accomplished in an afternoon, did you?)
- Looking outward at the organization and viewing its long range plans through the lens of the short range reality you will be facing from your current perspective

We introduce you to some critical topics that you will encounter along the way. We will lead you far enough into them so you will be able to understand and discuss their basic concepts with the wide range of professionals, consultants, and vendors you will encounter in your new role.

Topics such as:

- Analyzing Your Impression on Others
- Creating a Self-Development Plan
- Useful Metrics
 - HR metrics
 - Performance measurements & feedback
 - Statistical forecasting - break even analysis
- Performance Management Issues
- Establishing Performance Goals With others
- Designing “Hard” and “Soft” Performance Scales
- Understanding Work Performance Feedback Loops
- Designing a Performance Measurement Process
- Performance Problem Analysis
- Workforce Development Fundamentals
- Productivity Issues
- Understanding Power & Influence

There may be pieces of these topics with which you are already familiar or we may touch on issues that you think you'll never encounter where you currently work. Please have patience and study anyway because in this world of mergers, acquisitions, downsizing, rightsizing, or outright bankruptcy...you may not always work there and may need to know it in some unanticipated venue.

Also, we are mixing strategic concepts like aligning performance with long-term goals with general pointers on actually developing the performance metrics you can use.

In your role as a Strategic Planner, you will become a teacher, coach, counselor, temporary project manager, role model, and sometimes feel like you're the only person who grasps the enormity of facilitating the organizational changes necessary to achieve the executive's announced goals.

Don't let that bother you. We have provided many samples of forms, dialogues, discussion hints, and explanations of topics that you can use as you work with the key players you must rally to your mission of change. They are proven effective in the past and will work for you if you let them. Please feel free to print this course, take it with you, mark it up as needed and let it be a reference as you chart your journey forward.

Learning Outcomes

As a participant in this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify Seven Personal Elements of Success
2. Analyze your current role to determine important elements for your success as a strategic planner
3. Explain the activities and organizational perspective of a strategic planner
4. Develop a plan for building alliances with others
5. Examine your behaviors to determine if there are “qualifiers” associated with them that may restrict career your development.
6. Analyze your daily performances to determine if they are actually productive or just “busy”
7. Explain the difference between work stress and work tension within a workforce
8. Explain and determine whether you connect authentically with others
9. Analyze yourself to determine the extent of your orientation toward reality
10. Analyze your ability to embrace, engage, and deal with the negative.
11. Analyze your daily behavior to discover your potential for self-inflicting wounds
12. Analyze the potential impression that you make on others
13. Understand and apply the basic elements of getting people to like working with you
14. Prioritize those elements of your behavior to ensure the most successful interaction
15. Explain the value of managing your reaction to an event when you cannot control the event itself
16. Explain the value of maintaining a sense of proportion when encountering disappointment so as not to harm your strategic plans
17. A proven method of helping people adapt to organizational change
18. Apply the Cheshire cat’s lesson to organizational strategic planning
19. Describe and apply the value of “losing smartly”
20. Express desired goals with the critical trio of performance elements
21. Explain the value of and design “feedback loops” for workflows
22. Analyze typical project work processes for opportunities of process improvement
23. Identify the value of developing a mentoring relationship
24. Describe the various types and sources of power within an organization

25. Express planning expectations in terms guaranteed to result in productive outcomes
26. Design a “hard” & “soft” skills performance scale to measure employee performance within the parameters of your strategic plan
27. Design an overall employee performance assessment instrument to gauge progress within your strategic plan
28. Design an overall performance measurement process for organizational implementation
29. Develop a strategic action plan for individuals
30. Design and conduct effective goal-setting meetings

Introspection

If you plan to spend some time at the Executive Planning Table (we'll just call it the "Table" from here on) and throughout the organization being perceived as a thoughtful, competent, and reliable person, your journey upward begins by looking inward.

If you do not possess self-awareness, you risk creating career-damaging traps for yourself that will always come back to haunt you at the worst possible times. If you will spend a little time doing some introspection and changing now, you can keep yourself from stepping into many self-created problems later. You can be assured that life, family, friends, and work will also throw plenty of problems at you that you never expected – so why add any more to the pile than necessary?

Seven Personal Elements of Success

Look around you and think about the people that you know who are successful. For this course, we define “successful” as those people who maximize their skills and talents through benefiting others with minimal negative impact on those around them. We do not define successful as how much money they have or the extent of their power and influence.

Think about some of America’s largest companies during the late 1990s such as Enron, HealthSouth, Arthur Anderson, Tyco, and WorldCom¹. Their leaders earned millions of dollars annually and they personally held enormous power within their organizations and the business community around them. Now, years later, what do they all have in common? Their leaders have been charged with various kinds of criminal activity, been publicly disgraced, and some are even serving jail sentences.

Were they successful? Sure, and they also successfully ran their companies to the brink of extinction, destroyed the retirement hopes for thousands of employees, wiped out billions of dollars of investments for stockholders, and ruined the lives of many innocent people associated with them or

¹ http://money.cnn.com/2002/07/19/news/worldcom_bankruptcy/

their companies. In all cases, these people of extraordinary talents also possessed fatal flaws that brought them down.

If we can help you identify three essential elements of success, and you act on them, there is a strong likelihood you can enjoy true success without the self-destructive traits they had.

#1 You must be competent in the eyes of your supervisor/employer.

Your supervisor – who is your direct link upward to the organization – must think you are competent in something. It may be specialized knowledge about the business or a particular field of interest that is useful for the business such as in-depth knowledge about computers, a photography hobby, writing the newsletter for your church or volunteer organization, or an ease in public speaking although your job description may not involve any of those right now.

For example, if your leader can count on you to write or make suggestions for a report he or she must submit, then you are competent in their eyes even though writing reports may not be what the company currently pays you to do.

However, if your specialty were an ability to name every number one country song and the artist in the last 10 years, there would not be much value in that from a business perspective unless your employer was in the music business.



List the specialties you have that can be used at work.
(These can also be interests such as checking data, teaching others to do things, a joy in meeting new people, or planning events that you never considered as specialties.)

- How can you make these specialties available to your supervisor?
- If you do not have any specialties now, what work-related interests (see above) do you have that you can develop into specialties?
- How and when will you start developing them?

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Your greatest strength on your journey to the Table will be an aura of CONFIDENCE and COMPETENCE.

You won't be expected to know everything but to be confident and competent in what you do know.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

#2 You must be accessible to others.

If the people with whom you interact do not feel they can contact you easily, or approach you for a conversation or question, you are making it very difficult for your career development. As you develop your credentials as a Strategic Planner, you will encounter a much wider range of people and personalities than you did as an Engineer/PMP. It is critical to your growth that your increased work load does not mean you reduce your accessibility to those around you.

#3 You must be reliable.

This is probably one of the most important, yet least practiced, traits in the business world. If people do not feel they can count on you to keep commitments, even something as simple as being somewhere in 10 minutes if you have said you would, then you are limiting your potential for success.

Too many people only focus on larger commitments such as project dates, meeting times, or conference calls but far too few consider the small acts of omission that speak volumes about them. Telling an associate you'll stop by their desk after lunch and then never doing that or calling to say the plan has changed may not seem like a big deal in the greater puzzle of work life.

But when you think about it, the puzzle consists of hundreds of individual pieces that create the mosaic that is you. There is an adage in sports that fits here: "you play like you practice!" If you practice being as reliable for the little things as you are for the bigger ones, you will enhance your reputation as a reliable person. There aren't many compliments better than that!

#4 You must be engaged.

As long as you are working for that employer, it is essential to your career there that you become fully engaged in their success and as supportive of their policies and procedures as possible. If it becomes difficult to support them whole-heartedly you should consider finding an employer that you can.

Your success as a Strategic Planner depends on your credibility with your associates. If they sense you are not totally engaged in your job, then how can you expect them to be? The concept of "Do as I say, not as I do" will not help you on your path to the Table.

#5 You must be able to build alliances with others.

You must focus on being as helpful to others as possible without thinking about "what is in it for me to do this?" If you can develop an honest attitude of service to others, you will begin leveraging your efforts into greater results than you could have achieved alone.

You can develop that service attitude by asking yourself as you look around, "How can I make it easier for them to do (or get) what they are doing (or need)? Easier to get the information they need; easier to get the results they need; easier to work with my department or with me?"



This is not about "networking" which usually amounts to a group of contacts who rely on each other for information sharing or help. Rarely, though, do these networks help members move up and out of the network. An alliance, as we use it here, is about offering a hand to others when possible because at some point, someone will offer a hand to you.

Some people call this "paying it forward" and the premise is that if someone does something nice for you, rather than just paying them back, consider doing good deeds unexpectedly for others as the payment, too. This investment in those around you will reap unexpected benefits when you least expect them (and probably most need them.)

Think about other departments with whom you must interact as you do your work. What opportunities exist for improving the communication and workflows between you? What work problems are there within your department that your supervisor may allow you to analyze for possible solutions? What value would there be in people seeing you as a very valuable contributor to making their work life a little easier?

If you can help others see you as helpful and interested in their success, too, as you search for your own, you will learn the critical habit of building alliances that will become more essential as you move up in the organization.



How can I make it easier for them to do (or get) what they are doing (or need)? Easier to get the information they need; easier to get the results they need; easier to contact my department or my company?



What alliances have you developed so far in your workplace by being as helpful as possible?

What alliances have you developed so far in your life outside of work by being as helpful as possible?



Who are others with whom you can build an alliance by being as helpful as possible?

#6 You must develop the ability to not inflict wounds on yourself or have “qualifiers” mentioned when people describe you.

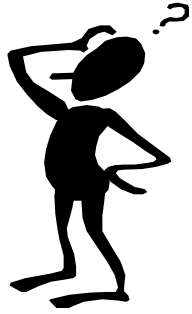
An Associated Press article in January 2007 (“2 in 5 Supervisors Don’t Keep Their Word, FSU study finds” by Brent Kallestad) reported these results of a survey from the Florida State University’s Business School that are classic examples of self-inflicted wounds:

- 39% of workers said their supervisors failed to keep promises
- 37% said their supervisor failed to give credit when due
- 31% said their supervisor gave them the “silent treatment” in the past year
- 27% said their supervisor made negative comments about them to other employees or management
- 23% said their supervisor blamed others to cover up mistakes or to minimize embarrassment.
- 4% said the supervisor invaded their privacy

In every case, the action of the supervisor diminished the level of trust between him or her and their employees and IT DID NOT HAVE TO HAPPEN. All of these are examples of self-inflicted wounds. In addition, how many people do you know with special skills or talents that always come with a qualifier statement? For example, “he is our best salesman but he is also such a jerk that no one else in the

department can stand him." Or maybe, "she is always so upbeat and positive that it almost makes you forget you can't tell her any information that you don't want spread around."

These qualifiers are always self-inflicted and guaranteed to limit the success of the individual.



What qualifiers do you think are associated with you?

How can they limit your success?

What will you do about them?

If you are having trouble coming up with some, ask a few of your close friends after first explaining to them that you are trying to identify and eliminate any traits that may hold you back. **Caution – do not ask them if you are not capable of dealing with the response honestly without argument!** If you start to argue with them, you can forget ever hearing about anything useful from them in the future.

#7 You must develop the ability to look at yourself objectively as others would see you and ask yourself:

- What is the extent of your creativity? Is it easy or difficult for you to envision things as they could be instead of as they are? Do you see potential solutions or obstacles? Many times it is difficult to change your structured viewpoint because your position revolves around making sure everyone "colors within the lines" to avoid safety risk to the employee or potential legal risk to the organization.
- How easily can you admit you don't know something? Then how hard are you willing to work to fill that knowledge gap?
- How willing are you to learn, explore, or even consider new things? Strategic planning isn't always based on extrapolating from what we are doing now. Sometimes it about creating a whole new entity from nothing!

Your Current Role

It is useful for you to look at your job in the organization from the perspective of your employer and ask yourself, "If I had to be rehired every day, would they hire me back every morning based on what I did the previous day?"



Describe here what you are paid to do in terms that include the quality that is expected of your work, the quantity that is expected, and the time available to do it. (For example, an administrative assistant may say, "I am expected to process 10 documents (quantity) an hour (time) with no errors (quality).")

(If you are having trouble identifying all three elements of quality, quantity, and time, this may be a reason why you and your leader do not share agreement on your productivity. This would be an excellent opportunity to talk with your supervisor and get those three elements clarified in your mind.)



What other aspects of your job do you think are important to your success but may not be listed in the job description? (This would be a good question for discussion with some coworkers.)

What about these:

- How do you deal with disappointment? Do you accept it, try to understand why it happened and move on or do you focus on it, keep talking about it, and have trouble moving past it?
- How do you react when you make a mistake? Do you try to learn from it, deny that it happened, or try to fix blame on anyone but you?
- How do you react to unexpected change? (Are there times when you wish you had not said or done something in response to news of an unexpected change?)

- What do you do when someone confides in you about some rumor? Do you pass it on or does it end with you?
- What about the politics and “in crowd” that always exists within any organization? Do you spend much time concerned about them; do you complain to anyone who will listen that it’s so unfair that they exist; do you try to get into their circle; or do you accept it as a part of work life and move on?
- Where would your “reliability score” fall on a grade from 0-10 if your co-workers could respond to that question anonymously? How much can they count on you to be on time, keep a promise, or be accountable for your responsibilities?
- When you see opportunities for improvement in the work process, what determines whether you tell anyone:
 - If there is something in it for you
 - If you like your supervisor
 - If it will make the work easier for everyone
 - Something else – what?

Why do you think we are asking you these questions? All of them deal with how your peers may perceive you and goes back to the earlier discussion about self-inflicted "qualifiers" on page 16.

These traits may help you move ahead faster or slower and even halt your career advancement regardless of how well you perform in your formal job function. Take plenty of time to think about these past few pages because you cannot build your future on a less-than-firm foundation.

Your Character

Dr. Henry Cloud, author of *Integrity*², identifies these as some of the traits essential to success in the workplace (and life itself.) Look at each one and ask yourself how your peers would rate you if they could answer anonymously.

“The Ability to Connect Authentically Ultimately Leads to Trust”

Connecting “authentically” means, in Dr. Cloud’s terms, dealing with the people as they are without regard to race religion, sex, age, OR WHAT THEY CAN DO FOR YOU IN RETURN. If you help someone because you genuinely want to help them, then you connect authentically.



With whom have you connected authentically recently? (This does not have to be in the workplace.)

What led you to make that connection?

Do you think that was a rare occurrence or common?

Who has connected authentically with you recently? What was your reaction to what they did? If they were a coworker, would you be willing to help them in return sometime without them asking for help?

What do you think this statement about trust means: “Trust is historic”?

How does that relate to you?

² http://www.amazon.com/Integrity-Courage-Meet-Demands-Reality/dp/006084969X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1323098814&sr=8-1

The Ability to be Oriented toward the Truth

(This leads to finding and operating in reality)

How securely are your hopes and dreams anchored in truth/reality? The example we think of here is the television show, *American Idol*, and viewing the tryouts. While there are certainly people who have dreams of being successful singers and have the skills to support them, there are obviously many others who also have a dream but are not in touch with the truth; i.e., the reality that they have absolutely no talent at all.

Any viewer watching some of those tryouts as they screech and scream in a strange variety of costumes and outfits must ask himself or herself, "What are they thinking? How can they believe they actually have the talent to get on to a singing show?"

Are your career hopes and dreams solidly anchored in the truth (reality) or are they based on some false hopes that deny reality? Can you accept the fact that being tone deaf and unable to carry a tune will actually keep you from winning a singing contest?

Another risk of not living in reality is the danger that it can seriously harm you. Jim Collins, the author of "Good to Great"³ interviewed retired Admiral James Stockdale, USN, who served on active duty in the regular Navy for 37 years, most of those years at sea as a fighter pilot aboard aircraft carriers.



Shot down on his third combat tour over North Vietnam, he was the senior naval service prisoner of war in Hanoi for 7-1/2 years - tortured 15 times, in solitary confinement for four years, leg irons for two.

Mr. Collins asked which prisoners did not make it through the years of prisoner-of-war confinement. His reply, "Oh, that's easy, the optimists!" When the author admitted he did not understand, the Admiral clarified by saying, "The optimists were the ones who said, 'We're going to be out by Christmas.'"

³ [http://www.amazon.com/Good-Great-Companies-Leap-
Others/dp/0066620996/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1323099101&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/Good-Great-Companies-Leap-Others/dp/0066620996/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1323099101&sr=1-1)

Christmas would come and go. Then they would say, 'We'll be out by Easter.' Easter would come and go. Then it would be Thanksgiving and Christmas again. And they died of a broken heart."

Then he turned to the author and said, "This is a very important lesson. You must never confuse faith that you will prevail in the end – which you can never afford to lose – with the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they may be."

Another consideration is our self-imposed limitations. How many times have you heard someone (or you) say something like, "I'm too old to learn aboutor...I'm not smart enough to understand that...or...I never finished high school and can't..." A fact of human nature is that if we argue hard enough for our own limitations, we will always have them.



What limitations have you imposed on yourself as an excuse for why things are not working out for you? (Something like, "My schedule is so busy I don't have time for _____.")

What opportunities do you think you have missed in life because of these self-imposed barriers? What do you plan to do about them?

Can you keep these barriers and still expect to achieve all of the things about which you dream?

Do you expect to move upward in your career without formal or technical education beyond what you have just by wishing for it or thinking you somehow 'deserve it?' Do you really think that arriving for work just in time, taking every minute available for lunch and breaks, while being the first out the door at the end of the day will help your career?

The truth/reality is that simply fulfilling the job description is the least you can do to remain employed.

If you want to move upward, you must show your employers that you are worthy of consideration. In addition, you must extend yourself first without asking for what you will get in return if you want to be successful. While there is no guarantee that you will be successful if you do this, it is virtually guaranteed that you will not move upward if you do not.

The Ability to Embrace, Engage, and Deal with the Negative

This is about your ability to deal with things that do not work out as you wish. Maybe you did not get the amount of a raise that you were expecting or some other 'good thing' that was supposed to happen did not.

Do you get angry about the result and start talking about how there is "no justice, the boss doesn't like me; the boss has favorites, etc." or do you ask yourself what led to your assumption that a good thing was supposed to happen?

There is a statement in logic theory that there are no wrong conclusions, just faulty premises. This means that a wise person will not waste time whining about the wrong (in their mind) conclusion but will, instead, immediately begin to examine the factors (premises) that they thought would lead to the expected conclusion. This may lead to better preparation next time or clarification of assumptions that were not true to begin with.

The better you become in learning why things did not turn out as you expected will help you develop habits for success in the future. The wise person welcomes problems because they are an opportunity to learn something new! (If everything worked out just as you expected, what new things would you have learned?)



When did something that was important to you not work out as you expected?

How did you react?

What possible errors did you make in your assumptions?

What did you learn from the situation (or what could you learn if you went back and examined the premises more carefully?)

How will you act differently in the future when a similar situation comes up? (Remember, you cannot do things the way you always have and expect different results!)

Your Impression on Others

Many people have probably not considered what it is like (in the eyes of others) to work with them. Like the famous cartoon character, Popeye, they think, “I am what I am and that’s all that I am...” and consider nothing more about it.



In reality, the experience of working with you can range from someone thinking, “What a jerk!” to “Wow! What a nice person. I’m glad I met him (her)!” You may be asking yourself, “Why should I care what kind of an experience I create when working? I’m paid to work – not to create an experience.”

In today’s world, that may not be entirely true. In fact, the more positive of an experience that you create when interacting with others may do wonders for your career or, at least, make your existing job create less wear-and-tear in your own life and maybe expand your career opportunities, too.

Although your job may not have the words “customer service” in the title, anyone with whom you interact is a customer. Whether they pay for your services (such as in a profession) or your services are included in your salary (as part of a project team or member of the workforce), there is still the service provider (you) and the service customer (the person receiving your goods or services) relationship present.

We can explain all of this much better if we take a customer service viewpoint. If you will take that perspective through this section, you will understand the message we are trying to convey and maybe get people to like working with you.



Suppose your retirement dinner from your organization were held tonight. What would you want people to say about you as an employee and co-worker? What specific behaviors of yours today can you list that would guarantee people will say that? How often do you thank people for what they do for you regardless how small it may seem?

This section is not about your extent of customer service in your current position because service is a 'given': it is the LEAST PEOPLE EXPECT when they deal with a professional like you are. Instead, it is about their experience during the delivery of that service.

For example, if you go into a bank to make a deposit, the least you expect is for the teller to take your check or cash, deposit it to your account, and give you a receipt. **The service that the bank is in business to provide is the least the customer expects.** If the teller just does that, it is nothing special from the customer's perspective.



However, their experience while in the bank during the transaction is what matters because they will do one of three things:

1. Forget it because everything about it was expected and mundane (ordinary, routine, or nothing special) and completely forgettable!
2. Remember it because parts of it or everything about it was unexpected and positive
3. Remember it because parts of it or everything about it was unexpected and negative

Do you think there is a connection between the amount of unexpected and positive (or negative) elements in an encounter and the extent to which it is considered positive or negative? Why?

Do you think it takes an equal number of unexpected positive or negative elements to make an experience positive or negative? Why?

(Just one negative aspect of an encounter can nullify all of the positive aspects in the minds of some people. Why take a chance?)

Moments of Truth



In 1986, Jan Carlzon, the former president of Scandinavian Airlines, wrote a book, Moments of Truth. In his book, he defines the moment of truth in business as this:

"Anytime a customer comes into contact with any aspect of a business, however remote, is an opportunity to form an impression."

From this simple concept, he took an airline that was failing and turned it around to be one of the most respected airlines in the industry.

Some examples of "moments of truth" in his book about the airline business are:

- When you call to make a reservation to take a flight,
- When you arrive at the airport and check your bags curbside,
- When you go inside and pick up your ticket at the ticket counter, (Author's Note: written in 1986, there were not e-tickets yet.)
- When you are greeted at the gate,
- When you are taken care of by the flight attendants onboard the aircraft, and
- When you are greeted at your destination.

These moments can be taken farther into categories we will call:

- Magic Moments (something unexpected **AND POSITIVE** happens)
- Miserable Moments (something unexpected **AND NEGATIVE** happens)
- Mundane Moments (something expected **AND ORDINARY** happens)

Which ones do you think are remembered most (circle)? Magic Miserable Mundane

What will people usually do after having a Magic or Miserable experience?

Which has the greatest potential to speed you along the path to the Table?

The Power of Pleasing People

Consumers will spend up to 10% more for the same product with better service.

When people receive good service, they will tell 9-12 other people about it.

When people receive poor service, they will tell up to 20 other people about it.

There is an 82% chance customers will stay if their complaint is handled quickly and pleasantly.



What would people telling others about your good customer service do for your Table journey?



What are some potential “moments of truth” in your business from an external (someone from outside your organization) customer’s perspectives and how do you think the customers would rate them? Use symbols for the reaction as: Magic = “+” Miserable = “x” Mundane = “?”

Description Of A “Moment Of Truth”	Typical Rating	Reason For That Rating
1		
2		
3		

What are some potential “moments of truth” in your business from an internal (someone from inside of your organization) customer’s perspective and how do you think the customers would rate them? Use symbols for the reaction as: Magic = “+” Miserable = “x” Mundane = “?”

Description Of A “Moment Of Truth”	Typical Rating	Reason For That Rating
1		
2		
3		



You're probably asking yourself.....

“What does Moments of Truth in my business have to do with getting me to the Table?”

As the Strategic Planner you want to become, you must understand this concept and be able to explain it and convince others of its value since customer service is such a critical part of a successful organization.

And the best way to understand it so you can explain it...is to have experienced it

What are some potential “moments of truth” WHEN DEALING WITH YOU from an external customer’s perspective and how do you think the customers would rate them? Use symbols for the reaction as:

Magic = “+” Miserable = “x” Mundane = “?”

Description Of A “Moment Of Truth”	Typical Rating	Reason For That Rating
1		
2		
3		

Is there room for improvement?

Why do you think so?

What description would you like it to be?

What will you start doing differently (and when) to get “moments of truth” involving you closer to the level you want?

What are some potential “moments of truth” WHEN DEALING WITH YOU from an internal customer’s perspective and how do you think the customers would rate them? Use symbols for the reaction as:

Magic = “+” Miserable = “x” Mundane = “?”

Description Of A “Moment Of Truth”	Typical Rating	Reason For That Rating
1		
2		
3		

Is there room for improvement?

Why do you think so?

What description would you like it to be?

What will you start doing differently (and when) to get “moments of truth” involving you closer to the level you want?

Once Again... the Basics



The basic elements of getting people to like working with you include:

- Developing a “customer” friendly attitude
- Expanding your definition of service
- Reconsidering who your “customers” are

Developing a Customer Friendly Attitude (aka "Relationship Building")

Think about one of the functions that define your job. (For example, as you do your current work, you probably look for particular documents, interact with people, meet with your supervisor or coworkers, answer questions, etc.)

List some of the steps involved with that function. If it involves interaction with another human being (internal or external), identify that person by position or title. (For example, if meeting with someone from another department to discuss a common problem, the meeting would be scheduled and held, business conducted, action items identified, follow-up issues identified, and possibly the next meeting scheduled.)

The job function I am describing is: _____

Steps	What I Do At This Step	I Interact With... (Job Function)	How I Interact (Call, email, fax, etc.)
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

II. Look at the steps above where you interacted with someone and analyze that interaction.

List the number of the step above when you interact with someone in your normal job duties.

Step	How I Interact (Call, email, fax)	What Do You Typically Say or Do During This Interaction?	How Would You Describe Your Relationship With That Person? Why?

Is there room for improvement in your relationship with those people you mentioned earlier?

What is in it for you to improve it?

What could you do to improve it?

What would you expect as a result of working to improve it?

When would you start doing that?



You're probably asking yourself.....

"How can I "establish a relationship" with a customer when I am facing a deadline, short-staffed, over worked, underappreciated, etc?"

As the Strategic Planner, you can still choose to be polite, smile, and be pleasant because they DID NOT CREATE THE PRESSURE on you.

Your reaction to the environment is always your choice – no one else controls it

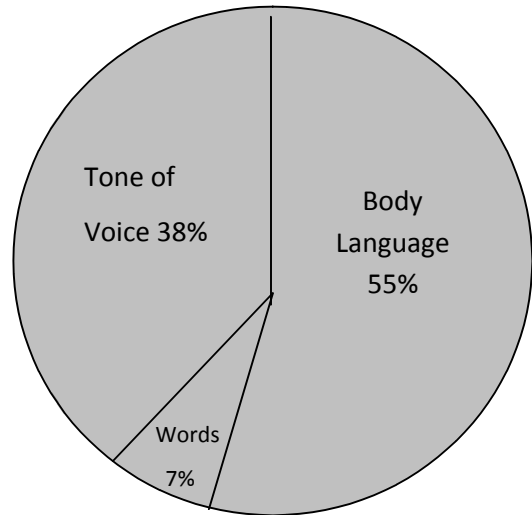
Other Opportunities for Self-help or Self-hurt

Here are other opportunities to prepare for what may await you.

One very important opportunity is your body language.

We say so much more with our body language than we do with our spoken language.

How can you tell when someone with whom you work isn't really happy to see you even when they do not say anything? How do you act when you see someone you are not happy to see?



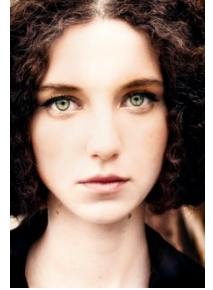
This graphic shows the percentage of the message we send with various parts of our behavior. How can you tell when someone on the telephone is not happy that you called even when you cannot see him or her? Which of those clues (above) do you probably display when you are not ready to deliver a “magic moment” of customer experience?

When you display them, how does that impact your value to your employer? Why should you consider your impact on the customer and your value to the company?

Visual Messages

How does “staring” differ from “looking at?” Would you rather have a coworker stare at you or look at you?

Keep that preference in mind when you deal with your customers.



When a customer is upset, what should you consider about eye contact?⁴

Your body posture and behavior can tell the customer so much about your interest in them. What messages do behaviors like these send to the customer?

- Leaning back or stepping away
- Turning your body away from the customer
- Looking past them at the clock or someone behind them
- Checking the vibrating cell phone to see who is calling
- Looking at their watches repeatedly
- Always a big sigh before answering the question
- Clicking a ball point pen open and closed while they talk to you
- Virtually no body movement, no facial reaction, and staring straight ahead

What do you do to convey you really are not interested in listening to someone?

My Space and Your Space



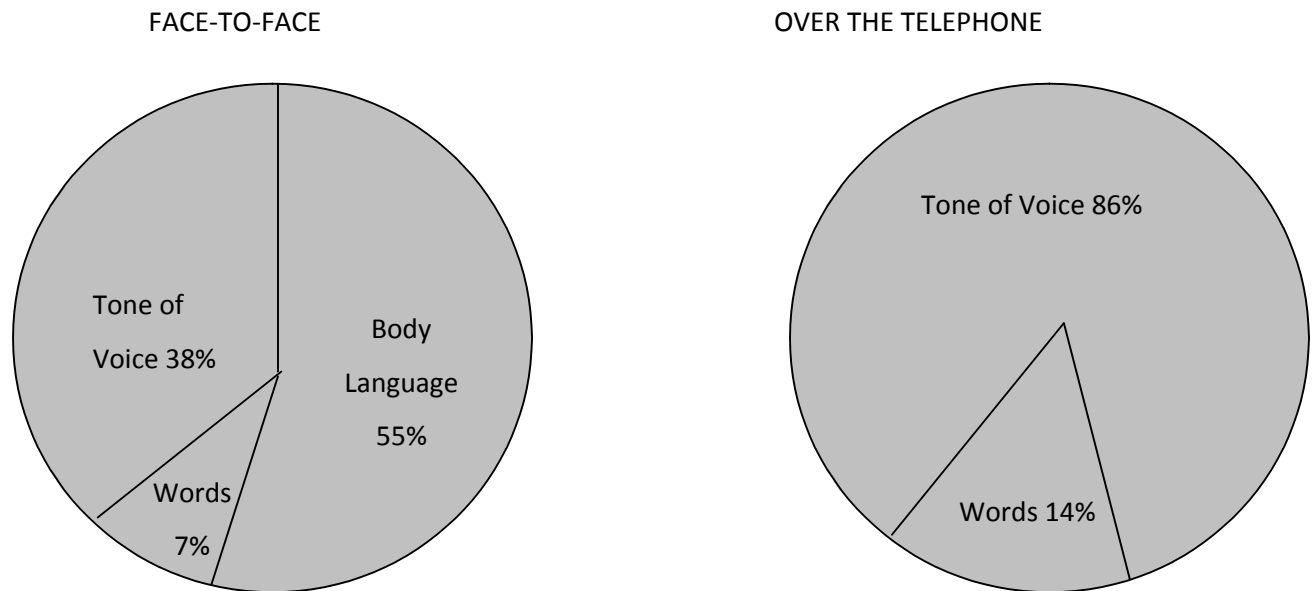
“Personal space” is the distance that feels comfortable between you and another person. If someone moves too closely into ours, we tend to back away. How can you tell if you are invading a customer’s space? What should you do?

How can someone tell if they are invading your space? What can you do?

⁴ Be careful with eye contact when a customer is upset because strong eye contact is, for many people, a challenge requiring a response. This is not the time to get them more agitated. Also, allow them to vent a little while telling them what you CAN do instead of what you cannot do which is probably what set them off to begin with.

Phone Tone & Other Behavior

Earlier we talked about the importance of body language when we can see the customers but how do things change when we talk to them on the telephone?



Read these statements and put emphasis on these underlined words:

- “Thank you for calling (your company, your department, however you normally answer the telephone). This is (your name). How may I help you?” (What does that sound like?)
- “Thank you for calling (your company, your department, however you normally answer the telephone). This is (your name). How may I help you?” (What does that sound like?)
- “Thank you for calling (your company, your department, however you normally answer the telephone). This is (your name). How may I help you?” (What does that sound like?)
- “Thank you for calling (your company, your department, however you normally answer the telephone). This is (your name). How may I help you?” (What does that sound like?)
- “Thank you for calling (your company, your department, however you normally answer the telephone). This is (your name). How may I help you?” (What does that sound like?)

Which emphasis do you think will provide the best customer experience?

Dealing with Angry Customers



How do you handle calls when the caller is angry, difficult, or has a complaint?

Here are some things to keep in mind for now. We will get into more detail later.

- Empathize (“I can understand how that would be frustrating.”) You are not agreeing with them – just demonstrating you are listening.
- Apologize (“I am sorry you had this problem.”) Remember agreement DOES NOT mean you admit guilt. It is just agreeing this is a frustrating situation.
- Stay positive (They are angry at the problem, not you!)
- Take responsibility for finding a solution
- Confirm your understanding (“Let me make sure I understand this correctly...”)

Then you can:

- Do not overreact to “trigger words” or phrases (Such as, “Doesn’t anyone there know what they’re doing?”)
- Listen completely to the complaint
- DO NOT BLAME ANYONE! (Not you, the caller, the company, or the department even if you know who did it)
- Paraphrase their comments and ask questions to make sure you understand the situation (this also demonstrates to them that you were paying attention.)
- Offer solutions and alternatives (if possible). An alternative gives the caller a sense of power and calms them. Why? (They feel like they have a choice.)

Confirm the solution with the caller and make sure they agree on what has been decided.

Remember, as a Strategic Planner, you must always appear to be CONFIDENT and COMPETENT in your knowledge. There is no better opportunity for practice than with an angry customer. Therefore, while they are expressing their displeasure about their situation, consider mentally thanking them for this great opportunity for more confidence and competence practice!

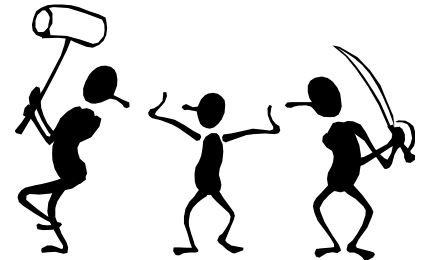
Your Emotions

There are too many self-help books about emotions on the market for us to get into another rehash of all of the same topics although there is a need to consider a few very specific elements from a Strategic Thinking perspective.

Separate the behavior from the emotion

As an engineering or project management professional, you know that describing behavior you have witnessed should not include words that describe emotions or attitudes but must be sure to focus on behaviors.

Strategic Planners mold the culture of the organization to align its components (employees and their collective work teams or groups) with what the organization wants to become. Part of that evolution is becoming more skilled at describing behaviors. (This is essential when we begin to talk about job performance.) **You must become a teacher who illustrates the points you are trying to make with examples, not just quote HR or corporate policies.**



For example, teach that it is not productive to say a co-worker was “rude and unprofessional” when he or she hung up on the customer because there are no universal definitions of rude or unprofessional. The chance that someone else would understand the extent of the situation exactly as you meant when you said rude and unprofessional is very slim and someone may think you are trying to paint a worse picture than it was.

However, if you said, “her voice became louder, her face got red, and then she slammed down the telephone”, you will be more accurate and credible because everything you said was an observable behavior. Anyone else witnessing the event would agree that her voice did get louder, her face became redder, and she hung up the telephone forcibly.

Whether or not they would agree it was rude is not addressed because



Strategic Partners are always trying to bring others along into the future.

Taking a teacher-like role emphasizes your confidence and competence in what you are doing.

Taking an authoritarian-type role emphasizes the “policeman” role of the HR generalist.



being rude is subject to opinion. Everyone will agree to what they saw (behaviors), but may not agree to what it means (rude or well deserved?)



Think about someone you have seen recently (in real life, television, or the movies) become very agitated and act out. Write out a description of the situation using behavioral or objective terms as much as possible.

Although you cannot control the unexpected, you can control your reaction to it.

Sometimes bad, undeserved, unwelcome, or unexpected things will happen to us without warning: that is just part of life and we cannot do much about them.

However, we can do something about the way we react to them. The wise person will remember that the reason for the reaction will soon be forgotten by coworkers and management but they may remember your reaction to it for years to come depending on the event and how you reacted. ("Remember when Jerry went ballistic last year in that meeting? Do you recall why? ")



- Think about a recent situation at work, home, or in the community where you reacted in a way that you later regretted.
- What do you think was the impact on others as they watched your performance? How long do you think they will remember it?
- If you could replay that event, what would you do differently?
- If you had acted differently, what do you think the witnesses would think about you now?

Why would a Strategic Planner consider these questions?

Maintain a sense of proportion and do not “globalize” when disappointed.



Everyone has probably had a friend who was very dramatic over seemingly small matters or about those with which we have no control.

For example, we may have known someone who could not get her braces off before the homecoming dance as she had planned and become nearly hysterical sobbing to her friends, “it’s the worst day of my life – my life is over – I just want to die, etc.”

Obviously it is important to that girl but is it really worse than the car accident she was in when she was younger, or will her life really not continue past 16 years of age because of the braces?

Of course not and she probably felt all the drama was necessary to demonstrate her disappointment. But, from an observer’s perspective, what does it tell us about her ability to handle disappointment?

If a similar disappointment happened at work and she over dramatized for all to see, what lingering memory would any member of management have if they had witnessed it? What would they think of her prospects as a future leader?



Think about a recent emotional outburst that you witnessed that was very dramatic and, in your opinion, way overdone. If that person were a coworker of yours, what affect would that performance have on your opinion of their ability to handle pressure within the department?

If you were their supervisor and they put on that show at work, what would be your reaction? Why would a Strategic Planner consider these questions?

Learn the ability to adapt to a changing world without wearing blinders.

Have you ever heard the saying, “you can’t go home again?” It does not mean that you cannot physically travel back to your home, of course, but rather that home will never again be for you now what it once was.

Your childhood friends have grown up, their (and your) view of the world has broadened (we hope) and our interpersonal relationships are now diluted with the experiences we had AFTER we all went our separate ways.

Obviously, we are not the same people at our high school reunion that we were when we graduated twenty years ago.



As a Strategic Planner, you will encounter some people who are not able to move past their

‘glory days” whether it was in their youth or when they were an “all-star” producer in the department years ago before we introduced computers.

You will have to help them realize that if they are not willing to adapt and stay current with the organization’s plans for growth or its innovations in technology, policies, and procedures, they are effectively asking to be left behind when the next reorganization occurs.



If their response is, “It will not happen to me because I have been here too long”, or “My job is too important – I am the only one who knows how to do this”, then they are wearing blinders and living in the world as IT WAS.

Think about this situation. Historically, before the 1970s, the Swiss were the center of the world trade for watches. They made the finest watches with their artistry of miniature gears, balance wheels, and all

of the associated machinery that made a watch work. They owned hundreds of patents on the mechanisms and believed they were invincible.

Moreover, when one of their imaginative designers came up with a design that used the vibrations of a quartz crystal to move the watch hands instead of the fine springs they had always used, they laughed and never even filed the patent because, in their minds, that is not how watches are “supposed to work.”



Later that year, a representative from Texas Instruments saw that new design at a trade show and discovered that the inventor did not protect it with a patent. The rest is history as more than 98% of the world’s timepieces are now “quartz” watches. (Your watch is probably quartz and a descendent of that Texas Instruments trade show discovery.)

The point of that story is, “Do not ever assume it cannot happen to you because it can.” Do not wear blinders to the changing world and be sure to keep asking yourself, “If I applied for my job today, would they still hire me?” That question becomes more important as time passes between when you were in your glory days of the past and the reality of today.

A personal note from the author

Something that worked well for me many years ago may be useful for you here. At the time, I was a department manager in a bank’s operations division. We were changing from a labor-intensive process to more automation using new technology that came easily to young employees but intimidated the older ones.

The older ones had a level of status because many years of work experience had enabled them to manually process the documents very quickly (relative to a non-tech environment) compared to the younger ones who did not have the years of practice.

As the new equipment came in and the younger ones began producing documents faster than the most skilled manual-producer could ever do, I saw fear and resistance beginning to build among the veterans. The days of their high production status were coming to a close quickly and

the technology and younger employees would soon turn their whole production world upside down.

In a flash of insight (or dumb luck), I realized that we could not move forward with the new technology and culture while our more senior clerks were clinging tightly to the past. Also, without some kind of recognition of what they had accomplished (i.e., acknowledging “they were somebody”), their resistance to change could poison the department.



So, what better solution was there than a party?

We had a “New Year’s Party” in July - only this was not a calendar new year but a technological new year. My assistant and I dreamed up some superlative awards that we could give to every veteran to make sure each person was uniquely recognized:

- “Most Loan Documents processed while working shorthanded”
- “Best mechanic on the sorter machine” (that was being replaced)
- "Most documents ever processed within an hour"
- etc.

In all honesty, I think the employees thought they were some really cheesy awards. But they also knew we were trying to help them move past this problem and we all needed to move ahead together, so they went along with it. We gave them a gaudy sash to wear with their title on it (“Best Sorter Mechanic”) and a crown made with construction paper and lots of glitter.

Since we were trashing the old equipment anyway (we had long since amortized them), we offered three swings with a hammer for \$1.00. The money went to a charity they selected and we took a lot of pictures of people whacking away at the equipment amid a lot of laughter.

After all of that fun and whacking at equipment, I summarized what it was all about by saying an era was closing while acknowledging the high producers that helped us get through it. We were closing one chapter of our history together and moving together into the next one. The older staff had helped the younger ones learn the old way and become productive. And now it was

time for the younger ones to return the favor by helping the veterans with the new technology. We posted the pictures on the walls, award winners hung their sashes by their desks, and we moved into our brave new world...TOGETHER.

We were able to do so easily because we took some time to acknowledge the value and contributions of the older ones and drew a formal close to the previous era. Since we formally acknowledged the "old days" were over, the production expectations of the veterans from that era were over, too. The older ones were satisfied that we properly appreciated them and then were able to accept the help of the younger ones.

Please remember that everyone AT ANY AGE needs to feel valued. As long as they think you are looking out for them, they will look out for you.



Describe a time when you had to adapt to a change in your life that may not have been comfortable but was necessary for your continued growth.

What enabled your decision to adapt and not fight the change?

Describe the situation of someone you know who did not adapt well to a change and has brought on problems for themselves ever since.

What do you think kept them from adapting gracefully? Why would your potential as a Strategic Planner consider these questions?

Losing Gracefully and Smartly

This goes back to the reality that in life we end up losing more often than we win. We do not necessarily mean BIG LOSSES all the time but smaller ones like not getting the parking space we want, having to send ten dozen resumes out to get one interview, not finding the perfect outfit when we go shopping. More often than not, things do not always go our way.

A good guideline to remember is Kenny Rogers' song, "The Gambler" when he told us,



"You gotta know when to hold 'em,
Know when to fold 'em,
Know when to walk away,
And know when to run!"

Many times in life, things just do not work out and we must learn to accept that. We must "know when to fold 'em" and "know when to (gracefully) walk away."

Unfortunately, many people who are not well-grounded in reality have trouble letting go of things (or situations) and keep trying to force their desired outcome - which only makes the situation worse. Losing gracefully means you have learned when to "fold 'em" and when to "walk away" to resume making progress in your life without being anchored to an outcome that is not going to change.



- Describe a time in your life when you did not know when to fold 'em and walk away. What problems did that cause for you?
- Why do you think you did not know when to fold 'em?
- What is different about you now? Why?

Why would a Strategic Planner consider these questions?

Losing “smartly” requires the strength to do some introspection and remembering what we said earlier: there are no false conclusions, only faulty premises. If you understand and believe that, then you can become “smarter” by asking yourself what mistakes you made with one of the premises that led to your faulty conclusion (the undesirable outcome).

Perhaps you did not get the promotion or choice assignment that you wanted. Instead of whining and complaining that you were cheated or that “office politics” had a hand in the decision, ask yourself, “were you REALLY as deserving of the desired outcome as you thought you were?”

Maybe you need to ask an objective (and honest) friend who is familiar with the situation if they can help you see something you may have overlooked. Perhaps the other person actually was more skillful in doing the job or had a greater knowledge of the work.

In addition, even if you were cheated or office politics had a hand in the decision (but you cannot prove it), the outcome will not change regardless of how much you whine, complain, or threaten. SO WHY WASTE THE ENERGY DOING SO?

Now your choice of response may also include asking yourself, “Do I really want to work in a place where things like this can happen?”



Describe a situation in your life when you did not get the result you expected.

What possible flaws were there in your assumptions that led to the faulty result?

Describe a time in your life when you went back, examined your original assumptions (the premises), and discovered a flaw in them before the faulty result occurred.

Why would a Strategic Planner consider these questions?

Your Development Plan

Although this next section is primarily about you, you may have to apply it to many others as you try to influence or shape the organizational culture into what it needs to be for the future. **(Influencing and shaping the organizational culture is a key element of being a strategic planner!)**

There are three distinct references we must make to lay the foundation for this next section on preparation for the journey to the Table.

1. One is, "Be all that you can be!"
2. The second comes from physics. It is the Second Law of Thermodynamics which states (paraphrased) that a "closed system winds down over time if there is no outside energy coming into it."
3. Finally, the third part is from a children's story that goes, "One day Alice came to a fork in the road and saw a Cheshire cat in a tree. "Which road do I take?" she asked. "Where do you want to go?" was his response. "I don't know", Alice answered. "Then", said the cat, "it doesn't matter. When you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there." (Lewis Carroll, Through the Looking Glass or the Adventures of Alice in Wonderland)



- What do you want to be doing in your career in five years?
- What field of knowledge would you want to know a lot about?
- What kind of accomplishments would you like to have?
- What do you want people to say about what it is like to work for you?
- What do you want people to say it is like working with you?

Why would a Strategic Planner consider these questions?

Be All That You Can Be

Before you can think about moving ahead, it is essential that you look back over all of the topics we mentioned earlier to eliminate (or reduce as much as possible) the negative impact of any habits, beliefs, or idiosyncrasies you have identified within yourself so you are not doing anything to restrict your development.

Next, consider a statement that we introduced back on page 22: "Argue for your limitations and they are yours."



Write here what you think that statement means.

List here any self-imposed limitations that you can remember you had since childhood.

(If you are having trouble thinking of any, complete this sentence for as many different situations as you can think of "If only this were different about me (or my situation)

_____, I could do (or have) this _____.")

Learn to keep asking, "What else?" A caution here is that we are not focusing on material or selfish things such as "what else have you gotten me for my birthday" or "what else are you going to do for me?"

We mean, instead, think of it in terms of expanding yourself by asking, "What else can I learn now that I know this?" or "What other uses can I find for this skill or knowledge that I have?" Grow your potential like a garden by continuing to ask yourself, "What else?" As soon as you stop looking to expand your horizons, you become frozen in time and the world will pass you by.



What skills or special knowledge do you have that you have not used for a while?

Where could you apply some of your existing skills or knowledge (perhaps in a non-conventional manner) that would benefit your employer?

What skills or special knowledge have you always wanted to have but, for some reason, have never gotten around to pursuing?

Why would a Strategic Planner consider these questions?

Note: Self-imposed limitations can apply to an organizational culture, not just individuals. If you hear someone's answer to a necessary change you are proposing as, "That's just not the way we do things here....", that is a HUGE SIGN that there are self-imposed limitations that will have to be overcome before you can advance the culture.

The Second Law of Thermodynamics

This law states (paraphrased) "a closed system winds down over time if there is no outside energy coming into it."



Think of a lighthouse keeper as living in a "closed system" back before the days of radio, television, and the Internet.

His job required him to live on an island offshore and keep the light bright and shining at night. There was virtually no contact with other humans and, even if he had an extensive library, there were still limitations to his potential for emotional, intellectual, and sociological growth. In short, over time, he would "wind down" intellectually and emotionally without some external input of energy from other people to keep his (internal) system developing.

A modern day example of this is people who become so self-absorbed in their world that they almost become a closed system. All they can talk about is the current events at work, internal politics, or their personal life. There is little, if any, thought given to where can these current events may lead them or what tomorrow can look like.

While it is certainly important to deal with the daily issues of work, and interact socially with coworkers and friends, an obsession with being so focused on these non-developmental interests will stunt your potential for career growth. Without taking frequent and consistent steps to expand their knowledge of the world around them and develop new skills and interests with others that we do not know, these individuals run the risk of limiting their personal development.

A student of this course should ask themselves (if he or she, too, is frequently caught up in the daily issues of work life to the extent that there is little room to consider their future or that of their organization), "When considering all of the time I spend focused on these daily work life issues and challenges, how much more employable am I now than I was before I became so engrossed in them?"

Why would a Strategic Planner consider that question?



If there are a finite number of hours allotted to your life, which would serve your desires better to move ahead in your career?

- Continue spending most of my work time becoming frustrated (and possibly demoralized) over doing the same routine tasks daily and putting out the same fires over and over again or...
- Break out of that non-developmental cycle and take your future in your hands by some honest introspection of your talents (and weaknesses) and developing your strengths as much as possible while minimizing the potential impact of your weaknesses on your career. Sure, you will still have those same fires as long as you are there but at least now you are working on creating a way out of it.

Your "developmental muscles" are just like your physical muscles: the more you use them, the more they will grow! You must take the initiative **TO CREATE YOUR OWN OPPORTUNITIES!**

The Lesson of the Cheshire Cat



How does the conversation between Alice and the Cheshire cat (page 45) relate to your personal development as a Strategic Planner?

We realize there is probably no formal position in your organization called "Strategic Planner" but you can create that role JUST BY DOING IT. Immediately after finishing this course, you can begin to look at the world around you differently than you did before.

Start looking at your daily routines and ask yourself, "If we were going to mold our organization from where we are to this _____ (based on what your organization does, create some realistic future for it), what would have to change about these routines?' How would we make that change happen?"

For example - suppose you are the newly designated Strategic Planner for the county in which you live. The new county commission chairman was elected on a platform of reducing wait times in lines for auto tags. As a Strategic Planner, what are the kinds of changes you would propose to accomplish that?

So we suggest that you not focus on a particular position in the future as a target but rather on a preparation of perspective that would get you an invitation to sit at the Table if the door of opportunity opened to you unexpectedly.



This is because you cannot control when that opportunity will come. Typically, we become frustrated when we think we can control things when, in reality, we cannot. (Our eagerly awaited golf outing is finally here and the biggest thunderstorm of the season arrives at the same time. While we are certainly disappointed, there is no reason to become agitated because we cannot control the weather. We can only control our reaction to it. Look back at the topic on page 37 as a review.)

You can control, however, the extent of your preparation for that moment when the door suddenly opens. When that happens, will you be invited in or will you hear, "Thanks but we are not interested" as the door closes in your face? So, you can identify your destination by asking yourself, "What skills and knowledge should a person in that position have" and then set out your personal quest to acquire them.

Finding a Mentor

www.dictionary.com defines 'mentor' as

1. a wise and trusted counselor or teacher.
2. an influential senior sponsor or supporter - verb (used without object)
3. to act as a mentor: She spent years mentoring to junior employees –verb (used with object)
4. to act as a mentor to: The brash young executive did not wish to be mentored by anyone.

Many organizations realize the value of having a mentoring program as an excellent way to preserve their “human capital” (collective corporate knowledge), retain talented younger employees, attract new employees, and develop their future leaders internally with little expense. This is a great idea if an individual is (a.) fortunate enough to be in an organization where a program like this exists and, (b.) fortunate enough to be invited to participate in it.

However, the reality is (a.) most organizations do not have these programs and (b.) a motivated individual does not have to be at the mercy of the employer to determine whether he or she has a mentor even if the organization has such a program. If your organization does not, why not select one (or more) for yourself? It is easier to do than you think.



What traits do most people have in common regardless of age, sex, race, national origin, etc? (They love to show how much they know, they love to get attention, and they want to be valued.)

Why would a Strategic Planner consider that question?

Now we will look at you:

What are the skills or knowledge from the previous section (page 49) that you identified as important to your professional growth and development?

Who are the people within your organization that you think possess these now?

How can you get them to share these with you?

(One way would be to look at the situation from their perspective and ask yourself, "Why would they want to share their skills and knowledge with me?")

If you do not come up with any answers, ask yourself, "Why would I want to share any special skills or knowledge I have with someone else?" Possible reasons may include:

- Ego – it is nice to be considered as an 'expert' in something
- Self-esteem – it makes you feel good to help others
- The concept of legacy – it's nice to think that you can leave something behind
- Helping others – watching them become something new and better as a result of your gifts

Our point here is this: the same reasons that would motivate you to help someone else will probably motivate them to do the same thing for you. All you have to do is give them the chance to experience the gratification they seek (ego, self-esteem, etc.) by working with you.

When you think about it, YOU ARE DOING THEM A FAVOR, AREN'T YOU?

Power & Influence 101

It is essential that a Strategic Planner understand the concept of power and influence within an organization.

If you will observe the behavior around you as a student of the organization instead of a member within it, you will quickly learn who has personal power - available to all with the self-determination to succeed - and those with formal power tied to their position. Personal power travels with you while individuals move into and out of positions of power - it does not move with them.

We will help you identify the power & influence (P&I) events around you, tell you what to look for, and how to capitalize on the opportunities which appear. We want your first invitation to the Table to become a lasting seat!

A View of Power

Ninety individuals nominated by their peers as the most influential leaders in our society were interviewed by a leading organizational development guru a few years ago. After comparing the information gathered from their responses, it became apparent they all shared a single characteristic of power: they made others feel powerful!

They were seen as powerful because they had learned how to build a strong power base in their own institutions or organizations. Their power evolved as they helped peers and subordinates accomplish exceptional tasks. If this were a Star Wars adventure, we would say they were using the “good side of the Force.”

Unfortunately, news of corporate price-fixing and accounting scandals has given the word “power” many unflattering connotations in today’s world. For someone to actively seek it sends out a “danger”



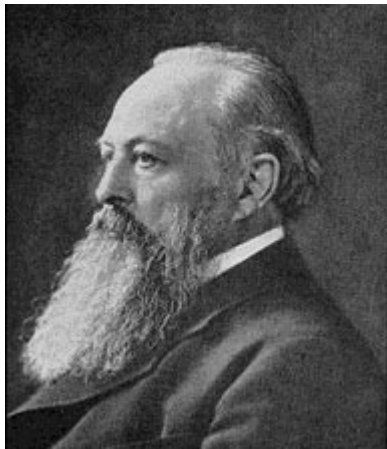
“The difference between someone who can get an idea off the ground and accepted in an organization and someone who can't isn't a question of who has the better idea. It's a question of who has political competence. Political competence isn't something you're born with, but a skill you learn. It's an out-in-the-open process of methodically mapping the political terrain, building coalitions, and leading them to get your idea adopted.”

Samuel Bacharach, a Cornell University professor
(Bacharach, 2005, p. 93)



signal reminding us of the worst in our fellow man. Nearly everyone who has spent any time in a large organization, public or private, has stories about conniving bosses, vindictive peers and subordinates, corporate abuses of power, and dirty office politics.

The good side of power is a difficult concept to embrace for most of us because power is typically associated with some form of domination over others. The truth is that power and influence do not inherently have the values of good or bad within them: it is the morality of the user that determines their application.



Remember Lord Acton's warning: "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

[Lord Acton](#), Letter to Bishop Mandell Creighton, 1887

Clearly, negative uses of power and influence may include:

- Being insensitive to others, abrasive, and intimidating
- Acting cold, aloof, and arrogant
- Betraying other's trust
- Intentionally manipulating others or situations

On the other hand, some positive indicators of a manager's upward and outward possession of power would include ability to:

- Intercede favorably on behalf of someone in trouble
- Get a desirable placement for a talented subordinate
- Get approval for expenditures beyond the budget
- Get items on and off the agenda at policy meetings
- Get fast access to top decision makers
- Maintain regular, frequent contact with top decision makers
- Acquire early information about decisions and policy shifts

Sources of Personal Power within the Organization

Power within an organization primarily comes from two factors: personal attributes and the person's formal position – who you are versus where you are. (Note: this is not about organizations with strong chains-of-authority and communication such as the military which is based on rank. Although other non-military organizations have a hierarchy of authority, they are not as rigidly enforced as in the military.)



There are four specific characteristics we must discuss within the scope of who you are:

1. Your expertise – specialized work related knowledge is a great advantage because it erases boundaries of background, formal education, or who you know. In other words, if you are an expert in doing the work of the organization, you have some personal power based on your expert knowledge and everyone recognizes it.
2. Your personal attraction – desirable characteristics seen in you by those around you. These include charisma, agreeable behavior, and physical characteristics. (We will explore these a little farther in a few minutes.)
3. The amount of effort you put into your work. The more that you are seen as dependable, ready to “go the extra mile”, or to stay late to help with unexpected work tells people that you are an above average person; i.e., the “team player” that every group needs for success.
4. “Conformity” is acting in alignment with the organization’s norms and values. The more you act the “way we expect” here in our company, the more we will accept you into our culture. The deeper you become immersed in our culture means the more influence (power) you are likely to have with us.

Expertise

As mentioned above, this is all about work-related knowledge and the reasonable assumption that people who know the most about how to do what we do will have more influence than those who know less.

The problem associated with this characteristic is when higher-ranking people are brought in from outside, they may have to rely on lower ranking people who have more work knowledge. This can give the subordinate an influence (probably temporary) within the organization that would seem disproportionate to their position which is typically low profile and nearly “invisible.”

The danger for the staff person is soon the new boss will get up to speed on the new position and will have a better perspective of what is going on around him/her. At that point, he/she will be able to review the actions of the subordinate and judge whether they acted in the new boss' best interests or not.

This is typical of a staff position where the incumbent handles all the forms, knows who to call, and must “train” the new Boss. The delicate balancing act for the subordinate is to use their knowledge to help the new Boss be successful and not to abuse the power they have by virtue of their position. The role of Radar O'Reilly in the M*A*S*H TV sitcom is an example of this situation.



What kind of expertise do you have that may be valuable in your current situation?

How can you expand your influence with this expertise?

Personal Attraction

There are three elements of personal attraction to consider:

- Charisma – Although the definition to the right may make it seem that this trait is more of a gift from God than something an individual can influence, research indicates there are some intentional behaviors that can lead to a “charismatic perception” by others:
 - Express a vision for the organization that is inspiring to others
 - Incur personal sacrifice and even risk while pursuing that vision
 - Recommend or support the use of non-traditional methods to achieve goals
 - Have a seemingly uncanny feel for what is possible and be very aware of timing in relation to the important issues within that vision
 - Most important of all – demonstrate sensitivity to members’ needs and concerns.
- Agreeable behavior – the characteristics necessary to develop and sustain friendships that would include as a minimum:
 - Support an open, honest, and loyal relationship
 - Be perceived as emotionally accessible – a good listener
 - Provide unconditional and positive regard and acceptance. (“I may not approve of what you did but I am still your friend.”)
 - Endure some sacrifices if the relationship requires them
 - Be genuinely sympathetic or empathetic as the situation demands
- Physical characteristics – Obviously, someone cannot do a lot about their innate physical characteristics but they can do something about their dress and grooming. Tabloids in the grocery store checkout line frequently run pictures of Hollywood stars with and without their makeup. Many times, the contrast is very striking.

cha-ris-ma n. pl. cha-ris-ma-ta (-mē-tē)
A rare personal quality attributed to leaders who arouse fervent popular devotion and enthusiasm.

Personal magnetism or charm: a television news program famed for the charisma of its anchors.

The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language,
Fourth Edition

Remember the saying that “you only get one chance to make a good first impression” and the fact that, whether justified or not, many people make snap judgments of others based on their appearance. Make sure you give yourself every advantage that you can from a physical appearance standpoint.



What can you do to improve your personal attraction in these three areas?

- Charisma – how can you become more charismatic?
- Agreeable behavior – how can you demonstrate more agreeable behavior?
- What can you do to change your personal characteristics to conform more to the culture without losing your individuality?

Effort

A high degree of personal effort is valued in organizations because it gives the perception the individual is reliable, persistent, and can be counted on to “go the extra mile” – (however one defines that nebulous phrase.) This trait is increasingly important in a business climate where flexibility of schedule amidst the rapidly changing environment is critical.

Unfortunately, this trait can also be a double-edged sword to the practitioner if this willingness to do “whatever it takes” is perceived by some as the departmental doormat: the person who does all the jobs no one else wants or will do and doesn’t have the strength to stand up for themselves and say no.

In this case, we recommend demonstrating a willingness to exert the extra effort but also be strong enough to ask for some trade-offs. “If I work late tonight to help you, can I leave early tomorrow to watch my child’s Little League baseball game?”



What opportunities exist for you to demonstrate maximum effort?

What trade-offs will you ask for to keep from becoming a doormat for the department?

Conformity

The more you attempt to conform or “fit in” with an organization means the more influence you are capable of gathering. This is much more than just following the dress code and the policies you received during the orientation process, it means that you take time to understand the culture.

Are there organizational stories of legendary efforts (“Ray stayed on the job for 72 hours during that hurricane 3 years ago”) or decisions made that emphasize the company values (“Even though we could have doubled our market share, we would have had to compromise quality”) that help define the culture?

If the company calls itself, “the company to own, the place to work, the neighbor to have”, what does that mean to you as a new employee? What does it tell you about the company's values? How can understanding that phrase increase your ability to conform and gain influence as a strong supporter of the company's vision of itself?

Suppose your employer were an insurance company and the founders decided that for anyone to be promoted above a certain level anywhere within the company, they had to meet some industry requirements for professional certification.

“But I’m in engineering or project management and don’t deal with customers! Why should I have to have that certification?” you may wonder. The answer would be that the founders wanted to make sure that every employee above a certain pay level shared the same understanding about the industry and the need for customer service. This means they would be more focused on the company overall instead of their functional department within it. In the founders’ minds, it is a way to insure the corporate culture endures.



If you were to protest loudly that it doesn’t make sense in today’s world regardless of what the founders thought fifty years ago, you could seriously threaten your credibility and subsequent influence within the organization. This is not to say that speaking up should be discouraged but rather an individual may be expected to have to “pay their dues” before they can speak with any legitimacy within the culture.

Managing “UP”

There are some ways in which a skillful subordinate can manage “up” and exert some influence over their Boss. This can be a very useful skill within an organization but, like so many other things, it can have a dangerous downside, too.

We suggest the primary motive behind using these skills should be a genuine desire to help your Boss or a peer be successful trusting that he or she will “take care of you” as time goes on. (This is the unscientific but often true concept that “what goes around, comes around.”) Otherwise, if you are perceived as a manipulator within the office environment only looking out for yourself, any good things you have done will quickly be overshadowed and your career may have hit a dead-end for the time being.



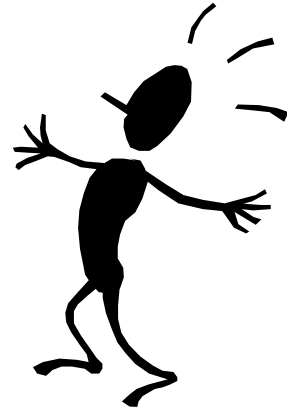
Since the work place is changing, it is critically important that the Boss be aware of what’s going on below him or her. And, since their skills in gathering information and developing relationships may not be sufficiently high that they can devise processes to collect the information they need, strategically-thinking subordinates can provide it if they are prepared to do so when the door of career opportunity opens. Before we identify what the smart subordinate can do, let’s review what Bosses can do that may be useful to a subordinate. Typically, they can exert varying amounts of influence through:

- Awarding (or withholding) rewards or special opportunities to subordinates
- Helping to get (or hinder) special consideration for transfers or promotions of subordinates
- Getting items or issues outside the normal flow of work placed before executives for special consideration
- Obtaining and sharing “inside information” about current or pending organizational events or situations
- Accessing and sharing any other particular advantages unique to their position and personal relationships with their superiors.

All of those advantages are potentially available to a subordinate who is able to “manage up”; i.e., leverage influence carefully through developing a successful relationship with the Boss.

These considerations will be helpful in managing a relationship with the Boss:

1. Make sure you understand their goals, objectives, priorities, values, strengths, weaknesses, blind spots, and working style (i.e., can see the “big picture” but not good with details or the contrary as detail focused but has trouble seeing the big picture).
2. Be able to identify the pressures on him or her and their source. (Perhaps you can help to relieve some.)
3. Make sure you understand your own version of #1 above
4. Understand the limits and extent of your skills and how they may be useful to the Boss
5. Determine the extent of your need for directions and frequent approval for your accomplishments. (Do you need a lot of positive feedback on things or are you confident that you can do a good job without constantly being told that?)
6. Make sure you have clearly understood the Boss’ expectations of you and that he or she understands what you need from him or her. (Such as clear directions and expectations - then leave me alone to do it.)
7. Make sure no surprises occur for them that you could have prevented or at least warned them about.
8. Be very selective about how you use their time and resources for your needs.
9. Read #1 again



Some key behaviors to consider before developing that relationship are:

- You must be willing to speak up if you want to influence up. This is another example of the potential amount of risk equals the amount of gain. The Boss may not want to hear the bad news but, if you are thoughtful in your presentation of it, they may be very grateful for your information. Especially if you present it as an attempt to save them some embarrassment.



How willing are you to speak up to the Boss about situations in your organization?

What are some situations about which you would speak up?

Before speaking up, you should team up. If what you have to report may impact several others, it is useful to have them on your side to support what you are doing. They can add credibility to your issue. However, be careful to make sure they aren't trying to use you to deliver bad news if the Boss is known for killing the messenger. They may be trying to manipulate you into doing their "dirty work."



How willing would you be to team up with someone else?

With whom would you want to team up? How would you get them interested in working with you to bring up the situation?

- Speak up without arguing up. Make sure you argue a different viewpoint using as much objective fact as possible. Do not become argumentative by basing your presentation on emotion or broad statements that have little value such as "everybody knows" or "it's common knowledge that..."

One way in which issues of concern can be pushed up the organization is described by Dutton and Ashford (1993) as "issue selling." If a particular issue concerns you, the employee, how can you escalate it upward so your Boss (and maybe even his or her Boss) devotes some of their limited time to address it?

Here are some considerations for packaging your concerns before sending them upward:

- Alignment – Make sure the issue is aligned with something valued by the organization and aligned (reasonably) with your role and responsibility within the organization. For example, if you are an engineer or project manager and bring up an accounting issue, there may be a stretch in the minds of some as to why you are bringing up an issue so far outside of your functional role.
- Credibility – Does the issue and your presentation of it (instead of someone else) indicate a genuine concern for the Boss and the organization or does it appear as a self-serving gesture on your part?

- **Publicity** – Present and set the issue in as public a forum as possible - meetings, face-to-face, emails, networks, conferences, or newsletters. The more who hear about it from you (or as your issue) increases the likelihood that it gets to the Boss’ agenda.
- **Solvability** – Identify how it can be solved (ideally using internal resources) because issues that can’t be solved are ignored and you’ll be seen as wasting their time for listening and yours for addressing it in the first place.
- **WIIFT** – “What’s-in-it-for-them” means you specify as clearly as possible the benefits of doing this. Topics such as redundancies (cost elimination), risk reduction, good will in the community, increased efficiencies leading to reduced costs and greater profits are all issues that would interest senior management.
- **Bundling** – Bundle your new issue with others already being considered after you clearly link yours to the others. For example, offering to share your user knowledge of a new software application the organization is implementing will enhance your reputation as you piggy-back on a change that has already been approved.
- **Teamwork** – This was identified on the previous page but is worth repeating here. The more people that you can get to support your idea means the greater the chance it will be noticed. (Also, the greater the chance someone may suggest improvements in your idea that make it look even better than you began with.)



Which of the packaging techniques above would you use to present your information to the Boss?

How would you package it for presentation?

How could this knowledge help to advance your strategic plan for the organization?

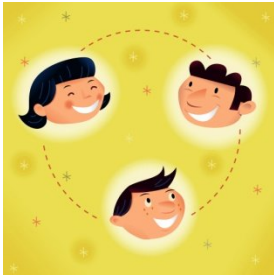
Position Power

The most common source of power in an organization is associated with the position (as opposed to the personal which we have discussed previously.) Typically, people holding higher positions within the organization have greater authority to act, higher spending limits, and perquisites (“perks”) that lower positions don’t enjoy.



However, someone does not have to have an elevated formal position within the organization to be capable of developing influence and limited power. As a Strategic Planner, these power and influence sources will be critical in helping you execute your strategic plan for the organization. The four types of positional power that we will look at are centrality, flexibility, visibility, and relevance.

Centrality



This is not about being located in a geographically central location, i.e., the “home office”, but rather in a central position within a broad network of task and interpersonal relationships. This is because, except for routine and repetitive tasks and in rare situations, **NO ONE HAS ALL THE INFORMATION THEY NEED TO COMPLETE THEIR ASSIGNMENT.**

The more that an individual is seen as a resource of information, as the department’s “go to” person, the greater will be their information influence and power within that network. This network can extend horizontally to include departmental peers and even to those with a similar rank in other departments and vertically when providing information to the Boss who may pass it along to his or her peers.

A key aspect of this source of power is that anyone with initiative and basic social skills can develop some influence and power without being in a positional setting. As we referenced in the sitcom *M*A*S*H* earlier, the company clerk, Corporal Radar O’Reilly, wielded great influence and power within the camp full of much higher ranking officers because he was the “go to” person for information, equipment, or supplies out of the ordinary. (A *M*A*S*H* website states, “The unit’s commander, Lt. Col.

Henry Blake, took him under his wing. Eventually, the young man became an excellent clerk, often balancing out Lt. Col. Blake's occasional silliness with the near-magical abilities to get whatever the unit needed. Throughout much of the series, he was more or less the glue that held the 4077th together, keeping the unit running like a well-oiled machine. In one episode, when Blake received a medal for the 95% efficiency of the unit, he "jokingly" remarked that Radar is the one running the 4077th using him as a prop.)



How could you create a position of centrality within your existing network at work?

How could you strengthen your position in this network?

How could a position like this help to advance your strategic plan for the organization?

Flexibility

Is your position one that has been around forever or has it been created recently as a response to a new company initiative, organizational requirement, or customer need? Is there much opportunity (or requirement) in your job for innovation, creativity, discretion, and “thinking out of the box”? If it is new and not well-defined and you can create it as you go, there is a strong likelihood that you can develop influence and power within your corner of the work world.

On the contrary, individuals in jobs that have existed forever and are part of a regimented work flow with well-defined routines and policies have little chance of developing much power and influence as they are.



However, if they are willing to adapt to the new environment and develop the necessary skills to take advantage of new opportunities that may emerge, they can certainly gain influence in developing the new practices required in a new environment.



How can you demonstrate flexibility in your current position?

Visibility



Good luck has been described as the intersection of preparation and opportunity. It is also important to add “visibility” to that formula because someone who does a great job albeit unseen in a vacuum still won’t develop much power and influence.

On the contrary, “good luck” that occurs where it is visible to those in positions of power can be a tremendous boost in influence, prestige, and potential power. Also, this visibility does not have to be in front of audiences making presentations; it can simply be having access to them and making the most of the opportunity. Or, as in the case of many executive secretaries, power and influence can mean controlling the access to the executives.

There are at least two examples of increasing your visibility that can be useful:

1. Be a part of a problem-solving task force. If you are selected (or better yet, volunteer, and are accepted) and the task force makes a breakthrough that helps the organization, make sure you are seen as a valuable participant (see “Centrality” on page 63).

Be sure to participate in the presentation of findings if given the chance, be a part of the group pictures (if any are taken), and anything that will help people associate you with the success of the project. (Remember; focus on how you can help the project be successful, not only on your public relations.)

2. Make your name easily seen and recognized. Any politician can tell you that publicity is critical if you want to have (or be thought to have) influence. Your name on a column within a departmental newsletter (even if you have to start the newsletter), on invitations to other departments for an event presented by your department or a group to whom you belong, or on a congratulatory note sent to someone within the organization who has accomplished

WARNING!!

Individuals who are new to the organizational world may assume that the author of a particularly good document or research project will automatically get the credit for the work. This is not always the case!

Frequently, the person who presents the document in a clear and concise manner that is clearly linked to the organization’s business objectives will be remembered longer by the audience than will the author.

(Think of a movie that you enjoyed a great deal. Who were the actors – the “presenters?” Who was the writer?)

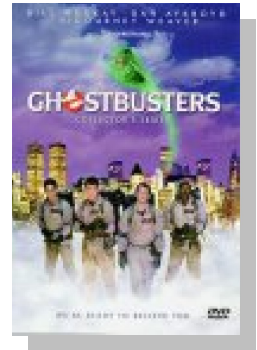
something significant recently or just joined the company. The more your name is legitimately (i.e., tied to organizational needs, issues, or events) visible by peers and those with higher rank can mean a gain in your influence and power.



What can you start doing today to increase your visibility within your work group?
How could this knowledge help to advance your strategic plan for the organization?

Relevance

This is very simple: the more your activities are seen to align with the critical issues and objectives within your organization usually means the more influence and power you will have. Remember, it doesn't have to be formal power as a result of your position but can be based on your specialized knowledge. When something happens and people ask, "Who You Gonna' Call?" make sure it's your name that comes up.



An example of how a typical functional position has gained prestige and influence over time would be the Human Resources Department. Once called Personnel and located in the fringes of the organizational chart (if it even had a formal name and wasn't just an additional duty of some executive's competent administrative assistant), it usually dealt with collecting timesheets and getting new employees into the payroll system and exiting ones out of it.

But, as the rights of employees became more codified into Federal Law (Affirmative Action, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Civil Rights Act of 1964), it became financially risky for organizations that did not have policies and procedures in place on how they treated their employees.

The writers and keepers of those policies and procedures were the Personnel Department who, as their value and influence within the organization grew, became known as Human Resources (HR). Then as mergers, takeovers, downsizing, and outsourcing became more common, the roles and responsibility of HR increased even more until they are now seen as the first line of defense against employment-related litigation.

Nearly anything that occurs within an organization that touches the employees (company picnic, menu of benefits, blood drives, relocation policies, recruiting, promotion, discipline, or termination) usually requires HR's blessing as a minimum. They are very relevant and can be very influential when suggesting actions to higher executives – they can be essential counselors within an organization.



How can you enhance your relevance to the organization?

How could this knowledge help to advance your strategic plan for the organization?

Strategies of Influence

In-flu-ence [in-floo-uh ns]—noun

1. The capacity or power of persons or things to be a compelling force on or produce effects on the actions, behavior, opinions, etc., of others: He used family influence to get the contract.
2. The action or process of producing effects on the actions, behavior, opinions, etc., of another or others: Her mother's influence made her stay.

There are at least three broad categories of behavior associated with influencing others:

- Retribution
- Reciprocity
- Reason

It is beyond the scope of this course to make value judgments on the techniques presented: we leave that up to the reader. The intent of this course is to help the reader become more aware of them so they can react accordingly when confronted with them.

Retribution

This is the most primitive and straightforward method of influencing someone – simply threaten them. Although the “civilized” world of large institutions, both public and private, would not condone overt threats being made, we have devised more subtle methods of getting what we want.



We may not threaten others directly but we imply similar meanings when we use these techniques:

- Social Pressure – “Everyone else in your group wants to do it. What about you?”
- Positional Pressure – “I’m sure you and I can resolve this without having to get the Boss involved” or “Because I’m the Boss, that’s why!”
- Exhaustion – “I’ll stop (the action) if you’ll give in.”
- Scarcity & Time Pressure – “If you don’t act now, they’ll be gone!”
- Martyr – “If you don’t give in, the others will suffer.”

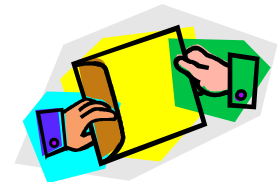


When in your work experience have you had the retribution tactic used on you or seen it used on someone else?

Was it effective? Why or why not?

Reciprocity

This is an exchange of items of value or a sense of obligation assumed by one side in hopes the other will be shamed into the desired action:



- Promise – “If you’ll do what I want, I’ll reward you.”
- Vanity – “People you value will think more (or less) of you if you’ll do (or not do) this.”
- Exchanging – “If I do this for you, will you do that for me?” (This differs slightly from ‘Promise’ in that I am offering to make the first move, not waiting for you to do it.) Please note that we suggest that you never ask someone to concede something as part of exchanging. For many people, “concede” means giving up something to the other side; i.e. a win-lose result. We

suggest that you say, "Let's trade this for that" because trading implies an exchange of value that retains the social level of those involved; i.e., a mutually satisfactory outcome.

- Debt – "You owe me this because of things I have done for you in the past."
- Reciprocal compromise – "Since I changed my initial price/offer, I expect that you'll act favorably." (It does not matter whether the initial price/offer was reasonable or not.)



When in your work experience have you had the reciprocity tactic used on you or seen it used on someone else?

Was it effective? Why or why not?

How could this knowledge help to advance your strategic plan for the organization?

Reason

We share similar personal values or viewpoints (or I want you to think we do).

- Outside Proof – "These expert opinions that you respect should convince you that I'm right."
- Basic Needs – "This is what I need. Will you help me?"
- Your Goal – "Doing this will help you achieve your goal of X."
- Consistent Values – "Doing this fits right in with your belief about X."
- Vanity – "You are the only one we know with this skill. Will you help us?" (Note that this is a slightly different variation of the 'Vanity' shown above.)
- Loyalty – "As a friend (fraternity, sorority, specialized group member), will you do this for me?"
- Altruism – "Will you do it for the good of the group?"





When in your work experience have you had the reason tactic used on you or seen it used on someone else?

Was it effective? Why or why not?

This is a review of Influencing Strategies in the workplace

Influence Strategy	When to Use It	Possible Advantages	Possible Disadvantages	Possible Complaints
Retribution	Unequal power in influencer's favor. Commitment and quality not important. Tight time constraints. Issues not important to the target. Resistance is likely. When else?	Quick response & fast action What else?	Resentment from the target builds quickly. Trust and morale quickly erode. Must escalate pressure each time to remain effective. What else?	Ethical issues Legal issues What else?
Reciprocity	Each side has something of value to exchange If there is enough time for negotiating. Joint needs are specific. Mutual commitment to broad goals are not needed. When else?	Low possibility of resistance since there is an exchange of value. What else?	May lead to thinking that all work-related directions or requests are negotiable. What else?	Those without something to "trade" have no leverage. What else?
Reason	Both sides share a common view of the goals. There is common respect between the parties. When else?	Strengthening of the relationship. What else?	It takes a long time to build the trust required for this approach. What else?	May take too long to reach an agreement if both sides feel strongly. What else?

Looking Outward at the Organization

Now let's shift our focus from an inward look at you to an outward look at the organization. As a Strategic Planner, you must begin thinking about where the organization as a whole is now, where it wants to go, and realize that strategic planning involves setting short-term, mid-term and long-term objectives. Also consider that you probably have been doing it in your personal life without realizing it.

There are a few terms that you will hear a lot about. Some you will have used in other times and places while a few may be completely new. Two that you will hear about may be confusing sometimes because a lot of people who use them are not really sure of the right way to use them, either, but will never admit it! The words are **mission** and **vision**!

Let's think about them in terms of planning next year's fictional vacation. You want to take your young family to Disney World next summer.

- What you want to do is your **mission**: Disneyworld in August of 2013 (this is written in September of 2012)
- Seeing yourself there doing it is the **vision**. (The word 'vision' means 'seeing something'.) You can see yourself strolling as a family down Disney's Main Street USA toward Cinderella's Castle. This is what inspires you to keep saving for the trip, scheduling someone to take care of the dog, cut the grass, your young children to keep their grades up in school, etc. even when it's hard to do.
- **Long-range goals** have metrics = \$2,500 by July 15, 2013 available to pay for it without using credit cards.
- **Short range goals** have metrics, which occur on the way to the long-range goals:
 - Parents save \$250/month for the next 10 months
 - Short range goals = \$62.50/week
 - Children maintain a minimum "B" average for all report cards



- Short range metrics = children get school work in on time and completed; never less than a "B"
- Mom makes on-line reservations by October 15, 2012 at Disneyworld and locally for the dog
- Dad makes sure the car is ready and schedules the grass cutting

Mission and Vision Statements

Long-range business goals make business teams and individuals accountable for moving forward a company's mission and vision. The mission statement articulates the purpose for the organization's existence. For example, a mission statement for a bicycle manufacturer might be to offer high-quality bicycles at value prices. (Or, from a personal perspective, it can be getting to Disneyworld next summer.)

A vision statement is more specific and expresses what we see ourselves becoming. **It is a futuristic view intended to pull us forward.** As an example, the bicycle manufacturer's vision statement might be to "see us become the largest-selling bicycle manufacturer by 2015."

(Or as a means to help the family maintain the enthusiasm necessary to accomplish all the short term goals necessary to get us to Disneyworld, our vision statement may be, "Let's get our picture taken in front of Cinderella's Castle!" A well-known vision shared by the organization can be useful in maintaining morale and lifting spirits during difficult times.)



Based on the mission and vision statements of the organization, top-down business objectives are developed by senior managers in the form of long-term business goals. "Top down" means that each department or business unit (BU) must develop its own unique goals that will support the overall goals of the organization.

The Strategic Planner becomes the link between the executive planners and the BU by articulating the mission to the business units, facilitating their execution in support of the "big picture", partnering with the senior BU leadership to develop the strategy to achieve the desired goals accountable for execution of the plan, and managing the critical milestones along the way,

That is certainly much more than the daily tasks of the Engineer/PMP.

Forecasting

Long-term business planning involves developing long-term goals based on assessing historical operating data. Using forecasting techniques in business planning helps leaders make informed predictions that can be used in developing long-term goals. We will touch more on fundamental statistics later. It is nothing too exotic, though, just enough to help you stay up with most planning conversations. Relevant internal data, especially HR metrics, about the company's performance as well as external data about the industry might be used to establish strategic long-term goals.

Managing the Future

Managing the future of the company lies at the heart of setting long-term business goals. This is particularly true of strategic business planning, which is "a total concept of the whole business involving a framework and process that guides its future," according to Kerry Napuk in his book "The Strategy-Led Business."⁵

Long-term planning involves:

- assessing a company's current market position
- setting measurable goals for where to take the company in the future
- *identifying what skills and knowledge (S&K) the workforce must have then
- *assessing what S&K the organization has now
- *developing strategies to close those S&K gaps
- establishing tactics for moving the company from where it is to where its leaders want it to be in the future

*Although you may see these as traditional Human Resource functions, it is essential that you understand them because without a workforce capable of supporting the organization's strategic planning, there WILL NOT BE AN ORGANIZATIONAL FUTURE. Additionally, your professional planning and execution skills can be a great resource if your HR staff is not particularly strong in these areas.

⁵ http://www.amazon.com/Strategy-Led-Business-Step---Step-McGraw-Hill/dp/0077092856/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1324230790&sr=8-2

The Least a Strategic Planner Needs to Understand

As we mentioned in the beginning of this course, there are some critical business-related topics with which you should be familiar. Although no one expects you to be an expert, your image as a Strategic Planner will be enhanced if you are familiar enough with these concepts that you can explain them to others. Remember, you want to appear CONFIDENT and COMPETENT in your knowledge.

These are the topics we will address next and do our very best to help you understand their strategic value.

- Useful Metrics
 - HR metrics
 - Performance measurements & feedback
 - Statistical forecasting - break even analysis
- Performance Issues
 - Performance problem analysis
- Workforce development fundamentals
- Production Concepts (a factory or a document assembly process)
 - Production work cycle, line efficiencies
- Supply chain management
- Capacity planning
- Vendor relations
- Marketing issues
- Projects
 - Group Dynamic Dangers: Abilene Paradox
 - Project performance issues
- Preparing and presenting a financial proposal
- Understanding power & influence



The models of forms that we use for teaching purposes in this course have come from very successful practices in a banking operations environment. Use them as they are, modify them, or ignore them as you see fit.

We use them to facilitate our teaching theory for adult learners: *"If you can help them understand the WHY of something, they can usually figure out the HOW for themselves."*

So we'll take time to explain everything as clearly as we can and allow you to invent your own applications.



Useful Metrics

As senior management becomes more aware of the expense of recruiting, retaining, and developing a workforce capable of taking the organization into the future, the subject of metrics becomes more critical.

There is an old management saying that typifies the perceived value of measuring things: "What gets measured gets done." Since long-and short range goals are built around metrics - as well as our methods of tracking progress toward them - it is very desirable that a Strategic Planner become more familiar with them.

Unfortunately, there are no HR profession-wide agreements on what to measure and how to do it. Unlike established professions like Engineering, Accounting, or Financial Planning where there are universally agreed-upon formulae for measuring nearly everything as well as the reasons to measure those things, there are no such standards yet for the HR world. The evolving profession of Human Resources is not that far away from its roots as the Personnel Department whose primary functions were to recruit, hire, and fire. As it matures, those universally understood and applied metrics will begin to appear and solidify as part of the body of knowledge.

So you, as a Strategic Planner must wonder, "What metrics should we use?" There is a simple and obvious answer here. Although we've already talked about the Cheshire Cat (page 45), it's especially useful here to review that whole piece.

" One day Alice came to a fork in the road and saw a Cheshire cat in a tree. "Which road do I take?" she asked. "Where do you want to go?" was his response. "I don't know", Alice answered. "Then", said the cat, "it doesn't matter. When you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there." (Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass or the Adventures of Alice in Wonderland*)



The question, "what metrics should we use" is basically the same as Alice asking, "Which road do I take?" And, like the Cheshire Cat, our answer is basically the same: "When you don't know what you're measuring, any metric will work."

A very critical thinking process that is essential for a Strategic Planner is to consider the cause-and-effect sequence of events that lead to any outcome. Always ask yourself, "What led to the outcome we saw?" or "What needs to happen to lead to the desired outcome?"

The reason we mention the "cause-and-effect sequence" is this: we determine which metrics we should use by asking , "what outcomes are we talking about?" ("If you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there.") **In other words, just because we CAN measure something doesn't mean we SHOULD!**

The metrics we use in business should always be in support of our organizational goals. If the organizational goal next year is an increase in profits by 5%, then the Strategic Planner should ask, "what activities and their included measurements can lead to a 5% increase in profits?" (A public sector organization's goal may be to reduce expenses by 5% next year. Since the public sector does not measure profit, they can and should measure efficiency which can lead to a reduction in expenses.)

Author's note: It will seem as if the next section is a diversion from the metric conversation but it really isn't. Please have patience and stay with us as we take another big step on the journey to the Table.

We will be analyzing the upstream thinking that should occur which leads to the results we want. After we have covered several topics within that upstream analysis, we will return to the question about which metrics we should use.

So we will pretend we're a Strategic Planner our boss (remember the "fire in the belly?") tells us one of the goals for the organization next year is to increase profits by 5%.

Be sure to keep this fundamental organizational fact burned into your "memory chip." **Human Resources, though its linkage to hiring, firing, training, performance management, benefits and compensation has a unique and powerful influence on the greatest organizational expense: the workforce. Therefore, HR has an opportunity UNLIKE ANY OTHER SEGMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION to impact the bottom line if it will consider this simple fact of business life: every dime saved in expenses goes directly to the bottom line; i.e., PROFITS**

The Marketing Department cannot make that claim. Suppose an amazing marketing campaign increases sales 10%! Although that sounds impressive (and it certainly is), that 10% will be reduced greatly by the cost of sales - something over which Marketing has practically no control. And, outside of marketing the organization's goods or services, they cannot do much about the greatest organizational expense: the workforce.

The Accounting Department has very little to no influence on incurring operational expenses. They can certainly track those expenses and perform amazing financial gyrations with them but they cannot do much about the greatest organizational expense: the workforce.

The Legal Department is certainly critical by helping us navigate the minefields of state and federal laws and regulations. Even though they are so critical, they cannot do much about the greatest organizational expense: the workforce.

Think of any other department in your organization: Shipping, Safety, Security, etc. cannot do much about the greatest organizational expense: the workforce. Clearly, HR is in a unique position to be a strategic player at the highest levels.

The Strategic Planner's thinking should go something like this;



"The company wants to increase profits by 5% next year. That increase is a downstream result (look back at page 76) of many things being done through the company.

What are the strategic activities that we can implement in HR to help to reach that 5% goal?"

Since HR does not produce any products, its whole existence is based upon work processes involving hiring, firing, training, performance management, benefits, compensation, and anything else that comes up.

So the key here is to ask "Where can we gain work process improvements that will increase efficiency?" Since greater efficiency means more output per unit of work time, this is certainly worth pursuing more.

However, that simple question, "**Where can we gain work process improvements that will increase efficiency?**", has an enormous potential for upstream thinking that a wise Strategic Planner will consider. We will go through that process here. (Author's note: This list does not suggest that thinking about all of this occurs spontaneously but rather like peeling an onion: every time you remove one layer, there's another below it.)

- Before we start thinking about work process improvements, what departments are we talking about?
- Who will oversee this whole "work process analysis" initiative?
 - Will they have any authority or just responsibility?
- Identify the departments involved (author's note: probably all of them)
 - Specify the definition of the word "involved"
 - Will all do the same or are some exempt?
 - How will we determine exemptions or less than total involvement?
- Once we identify the departments involved, we have to have a universal understanding of what "work processes" are and what are not.
- Where will we get the universal training needed to make sure all the participants in the work process analysis share the same understanding of:
 - what we mean by the analysis terms
 - what processes we'll measure (the metrics we'll get into later)
 - how we'll measure them
 - how we'll collect data
 - who collects it?
 - how we'll report
 - who prepares the reports?
 - who receives the reports?
- Where will we find that training?
 - What will it need to look like?
 - Self-directing individual study
 - Webinars
 - Classroom presentation
 - A mixture of all of those

- Where will it take place?
 - What will that training cost?
 - Where will we get the money? (Currently in budget or new expense?)
 - If we don't have the money, how will we justify the expense?
 - If we do have the money, how do we allocate it?
 - Who will do the training?
 - If in house, can our trainers do a credible job? Do they need a -train-the-trainer class to prepare them?
 - If so, from where?
 - what will it cost?
 - In time to get the departmental training completed?
 - If outsourcing the training
 - who will do it?
 - what will it cost?
 - In time to get the departmental training completed?
 - Any alternatives to training that will be effective?
- Any best practices that we can use as benchmarks?
 - Are there any internal groups (political, social, or cultural) that may become obstacles to analyzing the work processes?
 - How long will it take before the department principals are ready to begin the process analysis? (Will we be able to do anything worthwhile in time to impact next year's profits?)
 - How will we select the principals?
 - Is this a one-time event (the old "flavor-of-the-month danger") or a new addition to our culture?
 - Who will be the Executive Champion of this to guide us past the organizational obstacles that always appear?
 - Do we have a timetable and package of executive expectations/guidelines to work within?

At the risk of boring you with repetition, we are repeating a few sections we had earlier to make it easier to follow the flow of our thinking and lead you on your journey in a logical and orderly manner.

There are some critical business-related topics with which you should be familiar. We present these as models upon which you can build your own thinking tailored to the uniqueness of your organization. We are not saying this is how you should do something but rather here is how you can do something.

Although no one expects you to be an expert, your image as a Strategic Planner will be enhanced if you are familiar enough with these concepts that you can explain them to others. Remember, you want to appear CONFIDENT and COMPETENT in your knowledge. These are the topics we will address next and do our very best to help you understand their strategic value.

- Useful Metrics (page 75)
- HR metrics - we need to explore a few more topics before we come back to this
- Performance measurements - the next topic



As we told you back in the beginning, a big part of this manual is a tool for you to use as you try to bring the rest of the organization along with you into the future. As an engineering or project management professional, the topics ahead may not be new to you but the role of having to get others to understand it may be.

In case that is your situation, please use these pages as a teaching guide. These are successful ways of presenting the material that will be new to so many people around you. Please allow us to help you carry that burden.

The original question of "where can we gain work process improvements that will increase efficiency?" means that we must look at the most basic component of that work flow: the individual employee.

Unless and until each employee is working at their full potential - and we have a way to measure and monitor whether or not they are - we will never be confident in our recommendations for process improvements.

The only way we can know with confidence if each employee is working at full potential is to improve our skills in defining job expectations, assigning measurements to those jobs, measuring objectively work within those jobs, and giving the employee meaningful feedback along the way.

Performance Measurements

Before we can analyze an entire work process, we must have a foundation of confidence that we are measuring every component of the work performed within that process confidently, accurately, and meaningfully. (Once again, just because we can measure something doesn't mean that we should if it doesn't help with making a decision.)

The whole performance assessment process begins with learning how to identify specifically the performance we expect and establishing a range within it from “the least we will accept” (like getting a “C” in school) to “the most we could hope for” (like the “A” in school).

Once we have established performance ranges for all of the job functions, we can start scheduling periodic meetings to review progress, make corrections or coach as needed. Then we can use the outcomes of the periodic meetings to create the employee’s annual performance assessment.

We will use the terms “hard skills” and “soft skills” in this course as we present our examples. The term “hard skills” as we use it refers to the activities we normally associate with a specific job function and they are typically measurable.

“Soft skills” are equally important but more universally applied to many functions beyond a specific one and not so easily measured. Hard skills are those used within a specific job function such as a programmer, machine operator, or a cabinetmaker. Soft skills are those that go across job functions that everyone uses like customer service, communication, or team working skills.



A cabinetmaker’s “hard skills” would be the obvious tasks such as measuring and cutting angles; familiarity with various kinds of wood; ability to assemble parts of a cabinet so there are no gaps or misfits; knowledge in mixing and applying paint and stains.

His “soft skills”, such as customer relations, safety, and teamwork (if working with others on a remodeling project) are equally as important but not as obvious. In

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Question: What determines if a measurement has meaning?

Answer: Does having this data help us make a business decision?

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

addition, they are not just relevant to cabinetmakers: everyone working on this project must share these same skills.

We must define the hard and soft skills for each position as they relate to the specific position if we want to establish a meaningful performance assessment process. Unless we define them as they specifically relate to a unique job, we will not be able to measure employee performance accurately and we risk them being poorly motivated to do the best job possible. Ultimately, their motivation drives their productivity.

A Brief Review of Performance and Productivity

Some fundamental strategic aspects of performance and productivity are:

- Productivity only occurs when the elements of quality, quantity, and time are defined and present. If any of these are missing, the person has simply been 'busy' and not really accomplished anything. You will never be able to move out of your existing rut.
- SMART (meaningful Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Tangible) goals are better than no goals but not as good as goals including quality, quantity, and time.
- Starting a project or a journey as Alice in Wonderland without a clear destination (outcome) in mind will result in a lot of wasted effort, possible stress, and may be career damaging if you do it too often.
- You must allow people to fail (gently) if they are going to learn. The trial-and-error process is a primary learning method for many people. Experience only comes from making mistakes while making mistakes only comes from lack of experience.
- Feedback loops are essential in a work process if we want people to become accountable for their performance. If there is no way for someone to track their work progress, they will not be able to self-correct when going wrong or continue as they are when going right without having the boss tell them. Strategic thinkers include self-monitoring opportunities in work flows.

- Work stress comes when people's anxiety builds as they try to meet vague expectations and there is no outlet after they finish because they are still worrying whether it was the right thing. This is very draining emotionally and can become unhealthy.
- Work tension means we have a heavy workload but understand the expectations, know how to do it, and can relax afterward. This is very draining physically but is a healthy way to exercise our abilities.

Why should a Strategic Planner understand these fundamentals?

Productive or Busy?

Do you think a person can be very busy but not very productive? (Yes, it occurs when they do not have clearly defined expectations.) (Could that question be useful in analyzing a work flow process?)



Tasks are not always productive. Sometimes people are just “busy.” When you define a task with the three critical performance standards that define “how much,” “how well” and “by when” (QOT), you establish goals and become productive.



The light bulb in a lamp is physically the same as a laser beam. However, the laser has all of its energy narrowly focused upon a particular point that gives it incredible power. How could you compare parts of your workday to the light bulb and the laser beam?

When do you feel more satisfied with your work: when you are acting like a light bulb or a laser beam?

Which condition ultimately makes your job more enjoyable and your work more productive?

How can you use the light bulb and laser beam example in a discussion with your employees?

Why would a Strategic Planner consider these questions?

Are These Situations Productive Or Busy?



Read each situation and put a checkmark under the appropriate “Productive” or “Busy” column. Remember, we define “productive” as having all three elements of how much (quantity), how well (quality), and by when (time) present in a situation.

The Situation	Productive	Busy	If “busy,” what is missing?
Grant has been pushing the cart loaded with statements up and down the hall for the past 45 minutes.			
Logan has processed 200 documents in the past 3 hours.			
Ben has the machine running items at a speed of 375/hour and a reject rate of .82%			
Cindy completed 3 hours of classes at night school this past quarter.			
Describe a typical activity of yours that is busy but not productive because you have not been told the three components of productivity; quality, quantity, and time. Which of the three components is missing? What will you do about it?			

- Grant is just busy and has accomplished nothing. What is the “quality” measurement?
- Logan has processed 200 documents but are they the correct ones? Where they processed accurately? There is no QUALITY component
- Ben has been productive. The quality component is the “reject rate”.
- Cindy completed the courses but we do not know her grades (quality). If she received an “F” that would technically be productive because all three components were present. However, her productivity was still below acceptable standards.

Establishing Effective Performance Goals

Select one of your employees or any employee whose work you are familiar with and write two effective performance goals for them. Put the words “how much,” “how well,” and “by when” in parenthesis behind the proper element within your goal. Use this as a sample:

Logan will complete the self-study course [Understanding Performance and Productivity](#) (“how much” = 1 class) within 6 months of today (“by when”) with at least a grade of ‘90%’ on the final quiz (“how well”).

My employee is _____

Their performance goal #1 is:

Their performance goal #2:

If you have some difficulty writing them at this point, just mark this spot and come back to it. We may have to cover some more material before you are comfortable with writing performance goals.

Three possible situations can happen when setting performance goals:

1. You set them; your employee takes them and tries to meet them.
2. Your employee sets them; you accept them and hope they can meet them.
3. You and your employee set them together and track progress together.

Which do you think is a better situation and why?

Why should a Strategic Planner have a solid understanding of establishing effective performance goals?

Designing a “Soft Skills” Performance Scale

We define “soft skills” as those that are not observable such as attitude or opinion, thus they are not easily measurable. We do not mean ‘soft’ as ‘unimportant’ skills.

It is easy to measure performance when we are dealing with tangible outcomes such as the number of loans processed accurately today (the three elements of quality, quantity, and time are here) but not so easy when the outcome is an intangible such as a satisfied customer.

Although it may be difficult to measure, it is essential that we have satisfied internal and external customers so we can stay in business. In addition, we need to have a way to monitor this relationship so we can tell if it is getting better, worse, or not changing BEFORE it gets so bad we lose the customer.



Let us look at some typical “soft” or hard-to-measure topics. How can you put a measurement on these topics?

- Quality Service
- Team Work
- Written Communication
- Oral Communications
- What other topics are in your work life?

Topics like these are difficult to measure with conventional methods of quality, quantity, and time.

However, we can measure them although from a different perspective. When you take a moment to look at those topics, it becomes evident that they primarily reply on someone’s opinion although we will certainly include measurements where possible. For example, “high quality” service is more meaningful if you can measure the accuracy or timeliness.

First, we should understand something about subjective and objective assessments. Subjective is very open to someone's opinion and may be difficult to defend or to reach a compromise when negotiating. You may have a favorite song but may not be able to convince someone else that it is great because he or she may not share your musical values and have a different opinion of what makes a song "great."

However, if you said, "The song is by X, it is at #1 on the charts, and they have had 13 million sellers in the past five years", you are making a strong argument with some objective points included (measurable) that it is probably worth listening to by the other person.

When we devise a measurement scale for subjective topics, it is important that we include as many elements as possible on which people can agree – especially the people most affected by your measurements.

It is easy to measure if you will work with your employees or the participants who will be impacted by the measurements to define jointly the behavioral traits that demonstrate the topic. We specify behavioral traits because people are more likely to agree on what they saw (objective) rather than on what it means (subjective).

(Once again, it is critical to the success of this measurement process that you include those whose behavior you expect to measure. Their "buy in" is critical for the success of this approach.)

For example, if you wanted to measure "PRIDE IN WORK," you first identify behavioral traits (things they do that everyone can see) that indicate they have pride in their work. Do not ask for things that are invisible such as "Pride in work means I feel good about myself."

- There are no spelling errors. (This is objective because the words are spelled correctly or not. There is little room for argument.)
- It is always on time or before. (This is objective because it is on time or not. There is little room for argument.)
- The person always uses the proper format for the report. (They either do or do not.)



- There are no smudges or “white outs” on the form. (Either smudges are there or they are not.)
- The data is always accurate. (It is accurate or it is not. There is no middle “subjective” ground.)

Do not spend time worrying if these are the “right” traits to consider because, if everyone who is involved in the assessment agrees these are the “right” topics, then no one is harmed with the outcome.

Therefore, if we all like them and no one is harmed, THEY MUST BE THE RIGHT ONES.

Establish a scale with a range of values from one extreme to the other for use with each trait. There is no magic number of survey points that you should use (1-3, 1-5, 1-7, 1-9,...?) But keep in mind that attitudes are not as precise as tangibles and too many may be meaningless or confusing. This scale of attitudes is called a Likert Scale⁶.

For example, 0 = never, 1 = rarely, 3 = more than rarely but not often, 4 = often but not frequently, 5 = frequently but not daily, 6 = daily is just asking for frustration from those taking the survey. Make it easy for people to use your survey because if you do not, you will not have any results to collect!

Also, include a way to respond if someone has an answer that does not fit the criteria of the question. For example, look at this survey (follows) that asks for the frequency that an observer sees a behavior. If the observer does not think he or she has seen enough to make a fair observation, give them a chance to say, “Does not apply” or something like that, so they do not feel compelled to force an answer and select a number that does not truly reflect their situation. If you mix their forced answer with others that are valid, you will only diminish the reliability of your other numerical scores.

1 = I never see this (Do not get overly concerned with the definition of “Never”. As long as you and the employees agree on what frequency it means, the scale will work.)

2 = I occasionally see this (Do not get overly concerned with the definition of “occasionally”. As long as you and the employees agree on what frequency it means, the scale will work.)

⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rensis_Likert

3 = I always see this (Do not get overly concerned with the definition of “Always”. As long as you and the employees agree on what frequency it means, the scale will work.)

X = Does not apply

CAUTION: Professionals such as engineers, surveyors, and accountants are used to working with specific data and may be uncomfortable with this concept.

They should remember we are measuring impressions and attitudes that may be vague at best. Asking a customer to rank satisfaction along a scale from “Not satisfied,” “Some satisfaction”, “Very Satisfied,” or “Does not apply” is more useful than asking them “are you 43% satisfied or 54%?”



Why should a Strategic Planner have a solid understanding of designing a soft skills performance assessment process?

Next, create a scale that converts the average of the Pride in Work trait surveys you administered to Joan Smith's customers into your performance assessment system.

Joan Smith's Pride in Work ("Pride in Work" is the <u>behavior</u> we are evaluating) Evaluation	Scores
1. There are no spelling errors.	3
2. It is always on time or before.	2*
3. She always uses the proper format for the report	2*
4. There are no smudges or "white outs" on the form.	3
5. Her data is always accurate	2*
Average score for the observation period	12/5= 2.4

*A wise leader will have documentation of the times when the employee did anything that would result in a less than perfect score. You can expect them to ask for proof they did not earn the top score but will never argue that they did!

In addition, you will improve their morale if you put the burden of proving they did not get the max score on you instead of putting the burden of proof on them they did earn it. This would be like a teacher in school telling you at the start of the year “Everyone has an “A” in this class until your scores show otherwise.”

The result from a grade standpoint is probably the same but the attitude of the students is much more optimistic and they may score better!

Here is an example of a performance scale range using a 1.0 – 3.0 scale:

1.0 – <2.0 = requires probation and a specific improvement plan

2.0 – 2.5 = satisfactory performance with lowest merit increase (**.5 point spread from 2.0 to 2.5)

>2.5 – 2.8 = above satisfactory performance with medium merit increase (**.3 point from 2.5 to 2.8)

>2.8 – 3.0 = outstanding performance and maximum merit increase (**.2 point from 2.8 to 3.0)

** Notice how the gap gets smaller as the performance range gets higher. In other words, the performance “target” for higher scores is harder to hit. You can ask your work team to help you develop some “teamwork” behavioral traits that you can use to measure that element of their job.

Why should a Strategic Planner have a solid understanding of establishing an effective soft skills performance survey?

You should consider accepting any traits that satisfy the participants involved and still fall within your general bounds of what the topic should cover. **They will feel more bound by their community standards than your outsider standards.**

Meet with the work group and explain to them that you want to develop a way to assess “teamwork” that fits with their work and is desirable and fair to all. This is the same approach as we used with "Pride in Work." (Be sure to reference the pro/con arguments about involving employees on page 92.)

As additional practice, ask them to offer some “Teamwork” traits that you could use on their organization’s annual performance assessment. Let us assume these are what they offered:

- Demonstrates willingness to help others when finished with own work without being asked.
- Demonstrates willingness to help others with less experience or confidence
- Demonstrates willingness to give credit to others when praise is given
- Demonstrates willingness to carry his/her fair share of the workload (and more at times if asked)
- They are reliable and can be counted on to carry their share of the workload

EXTRA BENEFIT: Traits like these also provide a group’s unofficial “code of conduct” that becomes a self-policing guideline. This takes a large burden off the leader because the team self-monitors its performance and helps new members assimilate more quickly.

It is easier to remind them their performance is not meeting their peers' expectations than if it's not meeting the boss' or the organizations. Peer pressure is always stronger than the "authority's" is.

How is that extra benefit useful for a Strategic Planner?

Employees Rating Each Other on Some Topics: Good or Bad Idea

First let us say we only mean in selected performance categories that they are able to observe such as teamwork. Ask that question among a group of supervisors, managers, and other experienced HR people and you will get many reasons for and against it. We believe that it is a good idea only when the group doing the rating has the maturity to understand the benefits it offers.

Here are some issues for consideration about the argument for those who have not attempted it before.

- Teamwork is important to the success of our group.
(No one will argue that fact.)
- There are only two ways to evaluate (some, not all) individual performance contributions by members of the team: the leader can do the evaluation or the fellow team members can.
- The leader is not always present while the team is working. Frequently there are duties unique to leadership that requires him or her to be elsewhere such as attending meetings, working in the office planning, scheduling, budgeting, reporting, etc.
- There may be team members who work more diligently while the leader is present than they do when the leader is absent.
- Other team members frequently have to pick up that slack to meet the group's production goals.
- Since the leader was periodically absent and not able to observe performance at all times, there is a distinct possibility the slacker will get a performance rating that is higher than deserved when the leader does individual performance assessments on group members. This is unfair to those who had to pick up the slack to meet the group's goals. The group's members can solve this problem by doing anonymous assessments of each other if they choose to act objectively.



The leader can use these for the individual's performance scores under the "teamwork" category.

Some group members will object saying that assessments are the job of the leader. While that is true, there are some areas of the assessment that can contain peer input. It is also true that the frequently absent leader cannot observe and evaluate individual performance within the group as easily as group members can who are always there. The group can choose to score itself anonymously and be very accurate or insist the leader do the scoring and admit there may be undeserved scores.

The possibility of groups of team members giving those they do not like lower scores (or friends higher scores) than they deserve can be defeated by using the Olympic judge technique of throwing out the highest and lowest scores. Alternatively, you can require specific examples be included for the highest or lowest scores to count. If a group is willing to self-score, work production will increase because the slackers can no longer "get away" with their games: they know it and the group members know it.

Finally, how does this differ from the 360° assessment frequently used by human resource departments to assess mid-to senior level managers? The concept is NOT that unusual. You are probably already doing it - just at higher levels.

Why should a Strategic Planner be able to discuss CONFIDENTLY and COMPETENTLY the pros & cons of team members assessing each other on some topics?

Performance Assessment & Likert Scales

We saw earlier (page 88) that a Likert Scale is one that measures a range of opinion from one extreme to another such as ‘Agree Very Strongly’ to ‘Disagree Very Strongly’. With a Likert Scale, the measurement is the person’s self-assessment of their agreement with a range of scores. This process has come to have great popularity and credibility assuming the people taking the survey understand the subject and the questions you ask or statements made.

We suggest sending a survey with a cover memo like this to group members.

“John Smith is due for a performance assessment of his last 12 months of work. Part of our company’s annual Performance Assessment form requires an assessment of TEAMWORK. We value the Teamwork traits listed below in our group. Please rate John based on your experience with him during this past assessment period and send it to me by (date). If you want to include the highest or lowest scores, you must include specific examples for those scores to count.

Your name will be helpful if I have questions about your response BUT IT IS NOT REQUIRED. If you will feel more comfortable returning it anonymously, you may do that.”

Please rate these situations from a 1-10 using this rating: 1 = I never see that trait 3 = I rarely see it 5 = I see it occasionally 8 = I see it frequently 10 = I always see that trait X = I do not know well enough for an opinion.	
The trait we are looking for...	Your rating
Willingness to help others when finished with own work <u>without being asked</u> .	
Willingness to help others with less experience or confidence	
Willingness to give credit to others when praise is given	
Is reliable by always being here on time and doing what they promise	
Willingness to carry his/her fair share of the workload (and more at times if asked)	

When you get the replies, average the scores and assign a value according to the system you have developed with your employees. Expand this example farther by listing five traits that you would want to see displayed for written communications, oral communications, customer services, and quality service.

Designing a “Hard Skills” Performance Scale

We define “hard skills” in this course as those that are observable, thus measurable easily. We do not mean ‘hard’ as ‘difficult’ skills. Defining skills must always focus on the behaviors associated with the skills. We must define what we expect them to do at difference performance levels as part of the measurements.

As a review, measurements, to be effective, must contain references to:

- Quality of performance (How well they perform.)
- Quantity of performance (How many they must produce.)
- Time of performance (The deadline when the production must be completed.)

We abbreviate these three elements in this course as QQT. For example, suppose we were defining the job functions of a filing clerk. Their job deals with accurately (“accurately” is a quality element) filing stacks (“stacks” is a quantity element) of documents by a specific deadline (“deadline” is a time element.)

In addition to describing the three elements (QQT) of effective measurements, we must also identify a

★★★★★★★★★★
It is easy to develop a performance range if you will start in the middle - the “least they can do to get by” performance description. This is like the grade of “C” in school.

Then you can go up and down the scale easily to cover the range of performance that can occur.

★★★★★★★★★★

performance range that allows the employee and supervisor to monitor the work progress to determine their appropriate compensation for the work performed. This is like the grading system used in schools where A, B, C, D, F provide measurements for academic productivity.

The elements of quality, quantity, and time give us great flexibility in determining the performance range. We can define the filing clerk’s duties in a variety of ways. We will use a simple 1.0 – 5.0 scale to demonstrate the practice where 1.0 is “worst behavior” , 3.0 is the lowest level of satisfactory behavior, and 5.0 is “best behavior”.

We can manipulate the elements of quality, quantity, and time to place greater emphasis on which of the three is most important for a specific

job. These tables demonstrate how the variables of quality, quantity, and time can be used across a rating scale of 1.0 - 5.0.

This table shows that greater scores (“better work”) are directly tied to increased filing of documents as long as there are no mistakes. The 2.0 score (like a “D” grade in school) can be either fewer documents with NO mistakes or even more than 30 documents with just one mistake. The time element remains the same.

Filing Clerk Performance Range - emphasis on quality	
5.0	File >30 documents per hour with no mistakes
4.0	File >20 - 30 documents per hour with no mistakes.
3.0	File at least 20 documents per hour with no mistakes.
2.0	File <20 but more than 15 documents per hour with no mistakes or any amount with 1 mistake.
1.0	File < 15 documents per hour with 1 mistake or any amount with 2 or more mistakes.

This table shows that we will tolerate a small number of mistakes as long as productivity is up.

Filing Clerk Performance Range - emphasis on productivity	
5.0	File >40 <u>documents</u> per hour with no mistakes.
4.0	File >40 <u>documents</u> per hour with <2 mistakes.
3.0	File at least 30 <u>documents</u> per hour with <=3 mistakes.
2.0	File at least 30 <u>documents</u> per hour with 3-4 mistakes or <30 with any mistakes.
1.0	File < 25 <u>documents</u> per hour with any amount of mistakes.

The premium in this example is on time.

Filing Clerk Performance Range - emphasis on time	
5.0	File >40 <u>documents</u> with no mistakes in less than 1 hour.
4.0	File >40 <u>documents</u> with no mistakes within 60-75 minutes. .
3.0	File at least 30 <u>documents</u> with no mistakes in 75-90 minutes.
2.0	File at least 30 <u>documents</u> in 75-90 minutes with <3 mistakes
1.0	File < 30 <u>documents</u> , take longer than 90 minutes, or make 3 or more mistakes.

In each situation, 3.0 was the threshold satisfactory performance level; i.e., the least they can do to get by without negative consequences. Also, that is the minimum level we pay them to perform. Some tasks do not allow much manipulation of the three elements because of the nature of the job.

Suppose government regulations required we process all the loan documents received accurately within 72 hours. We cannot control how many we receive: we must simply process them “all”. Every document must be accurate because people’s money and property is involved and we have a “\$1,000 error-free guarantee” in our advertising that gives us a marketing edge and drives a lot of business our way.



We will divide the inbound work into equal piles for the clerks available. Since the government requires accurate processing within 72 hours, we can use that as our grade of “C”. We know we cannot process less than all that came in nor can we drop the quality level. Therefore, the only variable we can use as an incentive for employees is time.

We can manipulate the time it takes to finish their share of the work as the incentive to finish early. That also gives us a chance to have some early finishers available to help slower ones if needed (after we document the files of the early finishers –and they know we did - as a reward) so we do not break the departmental deadline to finish all the work that came in.

If they can finish their share of the work accurately sooner than 60 hours since it came in, we will give them the highest score of 5.0 (an “A” for their work). Then, as an example, we can make 60-65 hours as a 4.0 (a “B”) and 66-72 hours as the 3.0 (a “C”).

Why should a Strategic Planner be able to explain CONFIDENTLY and COMPETENTLY how to develop a performance table using three different variables of performance criteria?

This illustrates how to use this model for a job position requiring specific technical skills as an on call software-programming technician.

On-call Responsiveness (based on problems being resolved within the established time frames set by the On-Call Policy, barring any obstacles encountered due to problems logging in; the availability of the network or other circumstances outside of the control of the person responding to the problem)

Note: Expectations should be evaluated based on the individual's job description and special considerations may need to be made for new employees or employees that are assigned applications that they do not support on a daily basis; such as groups that have combined on-call personnel for multiple applications or when an employee transfers to another application.

Problem Resolution Skills

Able to resolve problems on your own and within the established time frame set by the On-Call Policy

5	Consistently (98 - 100%) able to resolve problems on your own and all problems resolved within the established time frames.
4	Most of the time (90% - 97%) able to resolve problems on your own; however some assistance is needed from other team members on difficult or complex problems. All problems are resolved within the established time frames.
3	Occasionally (80% - 89%) needs assistance to resolve problems that are unfamiliar; you are able to resolve most problems on your own; most all problems are resolved within the established time frames.
2	Needs to improve; assistance is needed from other team members to resolve problems which are not complex.
1	Needs to develop; assistance is needed from other team members to resolve most problems; problems are not resolved within the established time frames.

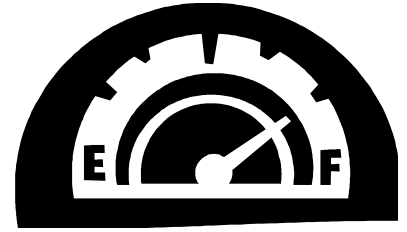
Client Problem Resolution Effectiveness

5	Consistently (98-100%) problems are fixed the first time; solutions do not cause additional or new problems; no business unit, application, or system performance impact and no customer impact.
4	Most of the time (90-97%) problems are fixed the first time; solutions do not cause additional or new problems; no business unit, application, or system performance impact and no customer impact.
3	Occasionally (80 -89%) problems are not fixed the first time; solutions did not cause additional or new problems; minor business unit, application or system performance impact occurred; no customer impact
2	Needs to improve; problems are not fixed the first time or solutions have caused additional problems; customer, an occasional business unit, application or system performance impact occurred
1	Needs to develop; problems are not fixed the first time or solutions have caused additional problems; customer, business unit, application or system performance impact occurs frequently.

Note: This would require input from other team members regarding the extent of help they provided.

Designing Feedback Loops

A “feedback loop” is simply a way of giving us feedback on what we are doing without someone else having to tell us.



The gas gauge in our car is a feedback instrument that lets us know constantly the status of our remaining fuel. The speedometer gives us a constant feedback on our speed. All gauges do the same thing – they tell you what is going on now within the system to which they are attached.

In school, the feedback loop was when the teacher returned our homework with a grade, the book report, the weekly quiz, etc. All of these helped us track how we were doing at any given time so when our parents asked, we had an answer. We did not have to wait until the end of the year to know if we were going to pass: we had that figured out early on. If the grades were not doing so well, we could work to bring them back up before having our parents threaten to ground us.

The same concept applies to the work place. Adults, just like the schoolchildren they used to be, want as much control of their destiny in their hands as possible without having someone tell them to do better. In addition, it is nice to know when you are doing just right so you can continue to do so without wandering off track without realizing.

If their goal is to produce ten completed documents in an hour, they can easily count the number they have completed. If their goal is to complete one foundation design in a day, then you must make sure you (and they) understand what must be included in the term “completed” and the included elements must be visible so the performer can track them.

If their goal is to satisfy you, it is imperative that you define clearly with measurable terms what satisfaction means. If you do not, then it is difficult for them to get progress on feedback, which means their chances of satisfying you diminish. As their chance of making you happy becomes smaller, their chance of getting positive feedback also diminishes taking morale and motivation with them.

The lesson in this section is to ask yourself, before you begin to design improvements for the work flow, “How will I and they know how they are performing at any time?” If you cannot answer that, you as their Strategic Planner are more to blame for the failure than they are.

As we design our performance assessment process, we must also build in as many feedback opportunities as possible so employees can self-correct as needed or stay on track when doing it correctly. The more often we can get feedback, the quicker we can adjust if necessary.

An effective feedback system places most of the responsibility for performance on the employee! It is hard to say, “I did not know I was not meeting expectations” when they (and their leader) know they get frequent feedback on their performance.

Why should a Strategic Planner be able to explain CONFIDENTLY and COMPETENTLY how to develop a performance feedback process that allows an employee to self-monitor their performance?

Designing the Performance Measurement Process

Measuring performance is one of the few things in life that we must consider from an all-or-nothing perspective. Trying to do one part without doing all the rest quickly becomes an exercise in futility.

If we want to evaluate an employee's performance so we can coach them to higher performance or turn them from deteriorating behavior through counseling, we must have some performance standards that tell us (and the employees) what we pay them to do. **Also, we cannot strategically improve work flow processes without an ability to measure each segment of that work flow.**

Then, if we have performance standards against which we will compare their behavior, we must devise a way to collect that information consistently and objectively. (Remember, it would be nice if there were feedback methods that allow the employees to track their own progress without waiting until the boss says something.)

Having collected it, we must have a fair and effective way to let them know how they are doing and provide guidelines on developing them to better performance. If we want to do this uniformly across the enterprise, we must train our evaluators (the supervisors and managers) how to do it fairly and effectively. Then, of course, this all supposes we have senior management well versed in organizational development practices with sufficient vision to design and administer such a process! All of that while the day-to-day business keeps going on!

As a way to speed your development as a Strategic Planner, we have devised a checklist that should help you get started in the right direction. Although it stays general in scope, it will give you an idea of what the model looks like. Once again, it is our belief if you teach people the "why" of something, they can figure out the "how" that works best for them.

Always begin your design of a performance assessment system by starting with the desired outcome and working backwards and ask yourself these questions. This process will quickly show you how much is involved with implementing an effective performance assessment process within an organization.

But, once in place, it is easy to maintain and makes the life of employees and supervisors much easier because all the prior stress-causing vagueness related to evaluating performance is gone. (Think about the school teacher who has to spend a lot of effort setting up the initial grading system and explaining it to the students. Once it is in place, however, it runs easily without much additional input of energy beside recording grades.)

1. What critical performances do we want to evaluate and measure in each job function? Focus on the significant few critical things that impact whether your organization meets its goals instead of the trivial many that are available.
2. What is the least acceptable performance level we will tolerate for each of those performances? Look back to “Hard Skills” on page 95.
3. How will we know OBJECTIVELY they are performing at the various levels? Think about a worst-case scenario. Suppose someone’s performance was so poor, you had to terminate him or her. What objective criteria would you use to justify your actions? Would a reasonable person think that makes sense or that you are trying to ‘stack the case against them?’ Would it stand up if it went to court? Please look back at our "hard"(page 95) or "soft" skills performance descriptions (page 86) for suggestions. This "knowing objectively" is the performance measurement data you want to collect.
4. How will we collect the data? What must the assessment form look like that will provide the information we want for parts “1” and “2” above. Are there “feedback loops” available so the employee can monitor his or her progress through the year instead of waiting for this annual confrontation?
5. What will the data mean? Does our method of defining performance expectations for each function fit with our assessment form and measurement scale? Does it help us make decisions about something critical to the success of the goal achievement?

For example, in school, every grade we receive must ultimately fit into the report card scale we use. If our grading system uses A, B, C, D, and F, we must make sure we do not give a grade of

“satisfactory” or 88% for an individual activity because these do not convert into our established system of letter grades and will have no meaning.

6. Have we trained our evaluators (typically supervisors and managers) how to use this assessment process so we have a useful performance assessment tool?
7. Do we have a uniform organization-wide agreement on how we will measure and assess performance?
8. Are the executives fully behind your performance evaluation system? (They must insist that their direct reports use it and that it be used downward through the organization.)

Please note that this concept of selecting critical behaviors and creating performance measurements for them should be a focus of intensive training as soon as possible among the evaluators (supervisors and managers) within each different functional group.

The failure or success of the whole process lies here. If they cannot or will not give it the serious attention it requires - and do not feel the "heat" of the executives behind them - your whole process will be built on sand instead of rock and you are doomed to failure.

Start with the few evaluators that you know will catch on quickly and have the vision to understand what you are trying to do. Once they have selected behaviors and created performance measurements for their work groups, ask them to lead other small training sessions with others who do not catch on so quickly.

An effective Strategic Planner will decide before starting this process how you will deal with the few pockets of resistance you are sure to encounter. (Hint: the process Executive Champion that we listed back on page 79 would be useful here.)

Any new initiative of this size is an all-or-nothing effort. The resistance is out there and you cannot allow them to keep on doing things the old way while you are trying to drag the rest of the organization into your new method.

Many “fence sitters” will be watching how you deal with these few ‘rebels.’ If you win, you will carry the fence sitters, too. If the rebels prevail, you may as well give up on this idea because all you will have is chaos as some hold to the old ways and others try the new while most sit in the middle and complain.

Developing a Strategic Action Plan

Setting goals is meaningless without an action plan of what you will do to make them happen. Here is an action plan that an employee would write using the night school example on page 84.

Step #1. I will call the night school representative within 2 days of this meeting and ask for the form needed to register for class.

Step #2. When I get the form, I fill it out, get my boss’ signature, and send it back to the night school representative within 2 days of my boss' signature.

Step #3. Then I will call the night school representative on the fifth day after sending it to confirm she received it and ask if I need to do anything else.



Transfer to here one of the performance goals you wrote for one of your employees back on page 85.

Now identify at least three action steps the employee could take to get started toward that goal.

Identify the quality, quantity, and time elements.

Conducting The Goal-Setting Meeting

As a new strategic planner, you may not have had many opportunities to conduct goal-setting meetings with employees. Or meetings that you may have had with your boss may not have gone so well. If either of those fit your situation, don't worry: we will show you an easy, yet effective, way to do it that may be worth sharing with those managers and supervisors who have trouble doing it in the past.

In this section, we portray the Strategic Planner as an internal consultant teaching this method to various managers and supervisors upon whom the organization depends for productivity and achievement of its goals.

The goal-setting meeting can be an excellent, non-threatening, opportunity to make sure the employee understands their job function and how it fits into the purpose of your organization. Here is an easy way to make that determination.

Give a copy of the Worksheet for the Goal-Setting Meeting (on the next page) to the employee about a week before the meeting. (Make sure you have spent time helping them understand SMART goals and the concept of QQT.)

Tell them to think about their work performance and professional development goals for the next observation period. Say something like, "This helps me discover how well I have communicated with you about your job and my expectations of your performance.



Please fill one out about what you expect of yourself and I will do one for you defining what I think you can do – plus a little stretching for professional growth. Then we'll compare them to help me understand your view of the job and your development plans."

If you are not sure of what to say, try something like, “If you were me, what would be the minimum acceptable performance and professional development that you would expect from someone with your experience, skills, and potential? Then what would be the maximum you think could be achieved?”

Remember, the more time you spend today clarifying questions, the less time you will have to spend tomorrow fixing mistakes.

You and your employee must both be prepared for the goal-setting meeting. This is a useful guide for preparation.

Worksheet for the Goal-Setting Meeting

Employee's Name: _____ Date: _____

Employee's Position: _____

Supervisor: _____

Goal setting period from (dd/mm/yyyy) _____ to _____ (dd/mm/yyyy)

WORK PERFORMANCE GOALS:

I plan to achieve these performance goals as an average over this period (including measurements of quality, quantity, and time).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS:

I plan to achieve these professional development goals over this period (including measurements of quality, quantity, and time).

I need this support from my leader to help me accomplish my goals:

Agreement and signature of employee's leader to provide support: _____ Date: _____

Holding the First Performance Results Meeting

Be sure to allow as much time as necessary for this meeting as you can because the success of your first one sets the stage for all that follow. You must at least ask these two questions in this first meeting regardless of what else you want to discuss:

1. What are your goals for this first period (1st quarter is ideal) of observation?"
2. "How can I help?"

It really does not have to be more complex than that!

All Subsequent Meetings

As with your first meeting, you can talk about nearly anything work-related you desire. However, make sure you ask (and get an answer for) these five questions. If you do, you will create a predictable continuity for all subsequent meetings that will make each one easier, more interactive, and valuable than the last.

1. "What were your goals for this past observation period?" (A rephrasing of question #1 above)
2. "How did you do?"
3. "How do you account for the gap above or below your goals?" (Don't accept a non-specific answer here such as "I don't know. I guess time just got away from me" or something like that. Or from a positive viewpoint, "I guess everything just worked out for me". Keep taking them back to actions they either did or failed to do that led to their success or failure. They must realize their future is in their hands, not someone else's.)
4. "What are your plans for the next period?" (Specific with elements of quality, quantity, and time)
5. "How can I help?" (Question # 2 above again.)

Clearly, the weight of the performance evaluation is on the employee, not on the leader. We will put this sample into a possible meeting with an employee and you can see how easily this works.

For example, suppose the employee's goal was to produce at least ("the least they can do to get by") an average of 32 widgets a day with no errors (remember QQT?). At the time of the meeting, the feedback process shows the employee (and supervisor) they are averaging only 28.3/day with no errors.

The meeting would go like this:

- Supervisor asks, "What were your goals for this past observation period?"
 - Employee says, "32 widgets/day with no errors"

- Supervisor asks, "How did you do?"
 - Employee says, "28.3/day with no errors"

- Supervisor asks, "How do you account for the gap above or below your goals?" In either case, above or below expectations, the employee must describe their actions that led to the results.
 - Employee offers the explanation

- Supervisor asks, "What are your plans for the next period?"
 - Employee offers a plan for improvement. If the supervisor likes it, then they move ahead. If not, the supervisor comments appropriately.

- Supervisor asks, "How can I help?"
 - Employee explains how the supervisor can help.

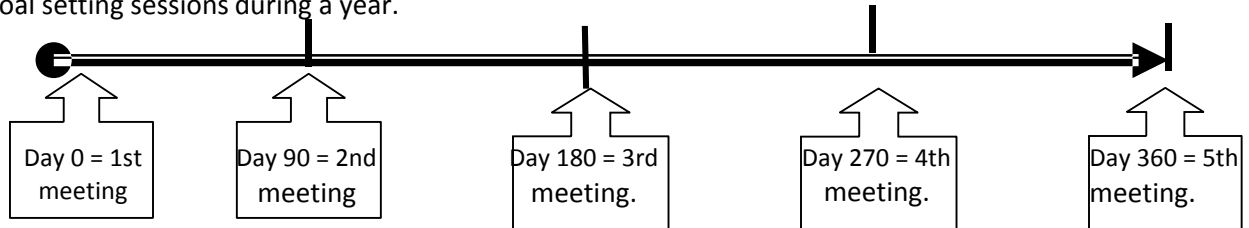
Do you see how simple it can be ONLY IF THERE ARE CLEARLY SPECIFIC AND MEASURABLE PERFORMANCE LEVELS built into the job and there are feedback loops that allow the employee to monitor their own progress? This eliminates all the potential for confrontation, arguments, tears, etc.

THERE ARE NO SURPRISES FOR EITHER SIDE!



Conducting A Performance Review Meeting

Use the “report card model” that we discussed earlier as a guide to establishing the frequency of your goal setting sessions during a year.



Did your teachers ever have to tell you how you were doing in class or did you know? How much stress do you think they experienced at “report card time”? (None - I was a high school Marine Science teacher and can confirm it.)

Why? (Giving students feedback on class work scores allowed the students to track their own grades. The work was already finished by report card time.)

Why would that experience from school be any different from your work place?

Who controls whether you have a stressFUL or stressFREE time doing performance assessments? (You control it by planning ahead.)

QUESTION: If you ask your employees at the beginning of the year, “How much do you want to earn this year?” what do you think they would say? Do you think it would be, “I want to earn all I can?”

Compare that question to your days in school when the teacher asked, “What kind of an average do you want to end up with this year?”, and you said, “I want to get on the Honor Roll!” If you wanted to end the year on the Honor Roll, what part did the teacher play in your plans? (Establishing the grading system and getting your scores back to you.)



Who carried the biggest part of the load of getting you on the Honor Roll? (You did!) How does that situation in grade school compare to your department when an employee says, "I want to earn all I can"?

QUESTION: Which is better?

Hold the end-of-observation-period evaluation and set-goals-for-next-period meeting at one time, or have two distinct meetings?

(Two distinct meetings are better. If there is bad news in the first one, the employee needs time to settle down before you set goals for the next period.

If they did very well, they need time to settle down so they do not reach for unrealistic goals that may become self-defeating.)



Conclusion

Back in the course overview (page 7) we said, "The short explanation is a strategic planner plans for tomorrow while a traditional HR generalist deals with issue of today" and promised, "this do-it-yourself (DIY) manual will help a self-directed generalist who wants to evolve from the day-to-day issues of resolving disputes, conducting investigations, and employee problem solving to eventually becoming a valued participant at "The Table" helping the executive team's plan for the future become a reality."

Do you think we did? Please tell me via <mailto:dg@outsourcetrainingonline.biz>.

We can also act as a resource for you as your organization goes through changes. If you think that would be helpful, please contact us.