

# THE MEASURABLE LASTING VALUE OF A SIMPLE STRATEGY

Strategy is overcomplicated. Government and commercial executives get so wrapped up in working to figure out all the details of a complex task or objective that they lose sight of the plan.

History drives a lot of great strategy. However, most executives are amnesiacs. They are working with so much urgency that they often suffer myopathy. Introspection and comparison requires intentionality. It requires shifting priorities or slowing down for a short time to look at their own past or at case studies for comparable organizations or situations.

Strategy is simply the decisions you have to make to achieve your goals. The execution of that strategy results in more deliberate planning by your team, but the decisions and goals must be clear.

Great, actionable strategy takes introspection, but it doesn't take high complexity. In fact, the opposite is true of great outcomes. Change is an outcome of strategy. It should be simple, easy to communicate, and easy to understand.

## SIMPLE FOUR-STEP STRATEGY APPROACH

By starting with a clear end goal, you can reverse engineer it. Clarify your purpose. That helps to identify the path you need to take, which informs the strategy you need to build. That, in turn informs the execution plan. Each step in the process below should have a clear answer. Answer them in order. Involve stakeholders from inside and outside the organization.

1

### WHAT MAKES YOU GREAT?

Is what you think makes you great the same as what drives your customer to buy from you? If the answer is no (and chances are, it will be), **ask why**. Perhaps you're not selling what makes you great well. If you can't define it or connect it to something of value for your customers, question your assumptions of how it makes you great.



2

### WHAT ARE YOUR COMPETITORS DOING?

Answering this question starts with defining your market. Know your competitors – who are they, what do they do, why do they win? Do they see you as being in this market? Then ask the key question – how are you better?



3

### WHAT OBJECTIVE DATA DO YOU HAVE THAT YOU CAN SHOW AND USE FOR YOUR STRATEGY?

Who are your new buyers? Who are your repeat buyers? Where are your areas of growth or loss? Bring internal and external data together - market trends, buying patterns, pipeline productivity and year over year growth, and any data you have on competitors and the market. More objective data is better; it helps overcome bias and get to ground truth as we continue the process.

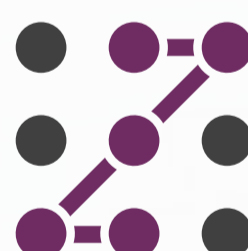


This data will vary for each organization. This step is less about developing metrics and more about ensuring your people are using quality data to inform and drive strategy development.

4

### USE THAT COLLECTED, FLOWING DATA TO SPOT PATTERNS.

What patterns exist in the data gathered? Does it support your assumptions about what makes you great or what your competitors are doing? Use this step to get to ground truth and make informed decisions about future strategy.



Myopathy can be a risk, so bring in third party advisors, board members, and other objective parties to help you spot patterns and decipher their meaning. Consider luck or externalities play a role in your patterns. Question what the patterns mean. Do they reinforce or contradict what you think makes you great, or assumptions about competitors?

The answers from these apparently simple considerations will ground you in reality. They will force you to understand what really actually worked and why. Chances are, you'll see that many things just happen. You'll be impacted by externalities that put you on an unanticipated path. It is important to accept that luck plays a part. Just because something worked or didn't work once, it doesn't mean the same result will happen again. That grounding in reality will help you adjust and adapt as you set each strategy in place.

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