
Putting Your Strategy Into Action

Strategy Implementation

By: Aaron Dyer

You have followed the first few steps of strategic planning and now it is time to put your strategy into action. The Action Plan is designed to come into play after you have thoroughly defined your goals and objectives that seek to achieve your Mission. It gives a specific outline of steps that need to be taken in order to achieve the strategic objectives. In a way, it is your blueprint for success, a blueprint that you will take action on and utilize to build a firm foundation for your business.

This phase of strategic planning will deliver concrete results and often brings about the emergence of new projects, a development that is part of a successful strategy. All employees are given a clear understanding of the strategy and its affect on them as a team member. You want them to be a part of your vision of a committed team who all work cohesively towards a common goal.

The creation of a strategic Action Plan is the binding element of this particular phase. It is the catalyst for change within your company that will then produce external results. The Action Plan should be designed after the main goals, objectives and strategies have been set. It will give a detailed definition of each project, sequencing the projects, developing a schedule, and indicating the require resource levels for each project. A large part of your strategy should include investing in your staff by taking the time to give them proper training in certain designated areas. If you are only as strong as your weakest link, take steps to ensure that you have

no weak links. Remember, good Action Plans, well-implemented, ensure that strategy does not die.



Action Plans set specific actions that lead to the implementation of your goals and objectives. It will answer the following questions:

- What are the benefits to be expected from implementing this strategy?
- What will be done?
- Who will be in charge of the plan? What are the roles and responsibilities?
- When will the plan start? When will it be completed? It is important to set realistic timetables.
- Where will the plan be implemented?
- What will be needed: people, money, information, and other resources?
- How will progress be measured and reported?
- What will be done if the results fall short?

You need to define the expected results and milestones of the Action Plan. You then need to monitor progress against those milestones and measurements of your objectives. It is best to try and keep your measures to one or two per objective. Good measures provide a way to see if our strategy is working and they will focus employees' attention on what matters most to success. Most importantly, they allow measurement of accomplishments, not just of the work that is performed

Basic guidelines for developing quality measurements:

- **Linked:** Measurements communicate what is strategically important by linking back to your strategic objectives.
- **Repeatable:** Measurements are continuous over time, allowing comparisons.

- **Leading:** Measurements can be used for establishing targets, leading to future performance.
- **Accountable:** Measurements are reliable, verifiable, and accurate.
- **Available:** Measurements can be derived when they are needed.

Ideally, with the amount of time and planning you took to create your strategy, the implementation process should yield positive results. However, being aware that things can go awry and preparing for the unfortunate scenarios can help you turn the negatives into positives. You will be able to bounce back more rapidly and learn from the challenges presented to you and your business. There should be no “negatives” in this strategic process, rather, there are learning experiences or hurdles that you will use to gain experience in how to deal with difficult situations in the future. Always reframe and you will be able to stay in the game!

About the Author:

Aaron Dyer is President of Dyer Consulting Group, a small business consulting firm that advises business owners on ways to grow their revenues and increase profitability through better strategic planning and financial management. For more information, and also to sign up for Aaron's future articles, visit www.DyerConsultingGroup.com

