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Businesses should be engaged in both strategic and tactical planning. Strategic decisions are the ones that govern what the company will do and why, while the tactics focus on how the business will get it done. Strategic decisions include what type of product, markets and acquisitions the company will pursue, and how it prioritizes costs for functions such as manufacturing, NIOCRIT and marketing. Tactical solutions include how employees will be reviewed and stimulated, where to find a new store, and what new accounting software to purchase. Strategic planning is high-level and often vague, with long terms, while tactical planning is practical, specific and short-term. Leaders prioritize the organization's strategy and tactics. A company that prioritizes strategy over tactics can be forward-thinking, but can perform poorly if it lacks technical execution. A tactical organization with a bad strategy can do the wrong thing very well. Effective strategic planning gives the company a direction to advance, and just as importantly, informs managers and managers what types of business the company will not be engaged in. Effective tactical planning allows the company to realize its vision to achieve the desired results. To succeed, a business must perform both types of planning equally well. However, people are often better at one form of thinking than others. Businesses must ensure that its managers are appointed to strategic and tactical planning based on skills rather than just work functions. Responding to today's needs does not necessarily preclude the vision of tomorrow. Consider this comment from the CEO in the midst of a corporate turnaround: I like to fluff up time scales completely. At the same time I am talking about strict cost reductions, I am also talking about the possibility of a major acquisition, which would completely restructure our company. People are very upset about this, but I feel like you can do these two things at the same time. These words express what I call strategic opportunism:1 the ability to stay focused on long-term goals while maintaining enough flexibility to address day-to-day challenges and recognize new opportunities. In several studies of senior managers, I have found that effective managers strike this balance.2 How? They constantly use certain habits - ways to find and process information and ways to act on the basis of ideas that help them bridge the gap between short-term requirements and long-term direction. The most important role of a senior manager, management theory tells us is to chart a long-term, strategic course for the company and keep the company moving in that direction. But success in this role can elude managers, as goals are often static, while the business environment is rare. Every day brings an incessant stream of surprises, new information, information, and what one CEO called a chaotic invasion of short-term problems. As a result, the daily agendas of many leaders are diffuse and reactive, not logical extensions of the global long-term plan. Moreover, some believe that the daily needs of their jobs make them rely heavily on formal planning. The president of a communications company, for example, described his style of work as: I have a lot of flitter from one to the other, but this business sometimes dictates this. You never do anything if you don't have at least two or three things going on at the same time. The inability to think strategically has its value, of course, as a communications executive acknowledged: Sometimes I feel like a rhino who doesn't see well and whose strength of concentration is scary; he charges that far and then forgets where he's going and stops to eat the grass. On the other hand, managers who only deal with charging for long-term goals can ignore something promising or threatening-hiding somewhere in the grass along the way. The challenge for senior managers, therefore, is to maintain flexibility and leadership. This article describes some of the thinking habits and ways of action that managers use to solve this problem. While there is no magic formula for balancing today's to-do list with a five-year plan, strategic opportunism can be an effective way to respond to pressing challenges in setting and achieving long-term goals. Habits of Thinking Few leaders will deny the need for strategic planning, but many fear that a strategic plan could become a straitjacket if followed too harshly. Indeed, these leaders see their strategic course not as a limitation of their activities, but as a common framework in which they can take advantage of the unexpected. They try to remain receptive to new information and opportunities, opportunities that are not strategically considered. Collecting Metaphor's ideas these leaders use to describe what they offer ways to find new ideas. One manager told me that he saw himself as a beachcomber, studying tide trophies and deciding whether to pick up a piece of flotsam, leave it, or throw it back, perhaps learn later when he washes again elsewhere in time. Another executive compared himself to a frog on a lily pad waiting for flies to buzz. He carefully chooses his point of view to attract the fattest and slowest flies. When combing the beach or watching flies, senior managers often collect ideas whose attitude to strategic goals may seem at first glance bleak. The process of gathering ideas is iterative and often indirect, as one explained General Managers Unit: You're looking for ways to get at trouble, so when a thing strikes you, you say, say, God! Here's one that looks pretty good. Sometimes it makes someone else make a little modification, and then you say, I like it too, and then you grab it. These ideas are a list of possibilities: Ultimately, the manager will take some and reject the others. One way that managers sift through and evaluate new ideas is through mental modeling or rehearsal. One of the CEOs, for example, foresaw the consequences of a plan proposed by some of his employees to announce the closure of the plant, convening a special meeting of plant managers: In my opinion, I take all my managers off the floor suddenly and ask them to come to the meeting. Now everyone in the factory sees it and wants to know: What's going on? The foregone thinking of this manager led him to develop a better plan: to speak to each manager individually. When the closure was announced to employees, managers were able to respond fully and knowingly to their questions about the closure and its consequences. Ideas collected by the manager form one aspect of his or her mental card: a rich, multidimensional set of associations between a multitude of tasks, people, problems, problems and goals that the manager is dealing with at any time.3 This card allows the manager to recognize and use new ideas that mesh with existing needs- the ability to generate more employee enthusiasm for a new product idea, say, either to gain the support of community leaders, or to recruit a new employee. One of the unit's managers, for example, after hearing that a qualified, experienced HR director would soon leave the office, realized that he could not fill her shoes quickly. He immediately redirected some of her tasks to other employees, both in the department and at the corporate level. His mental map of the role of HR director and the strengths of other employees allowed him to use the chance of a meeting during a visit to the corporation's headquarters to respond calmly to the impending departure. Creating Vision Ideas that survive experiments and trials will eventually become the building blocks of a vision manager for the company. Much has been written about how the vision of a leader inspires and motivates employees throughout the organization. Just as important, as one senior executive explained, the vision helps top managers organize their own thoughts and actions: All my actions are part of the same scheme. You can see that the plan is woven through everything. And so I'm trying to get the threads intertwined to make sure everyone follows roughly the same pattern. The manager's vision is different from the formal strategic plan. The strategic plan lists targets that are generally objective, measurable and time-limited. In contrast, the vision of the company manager Direction is often common, high-quality, difficult to formulate; This can entail things like becoming the best on a given feature, a high-quality manufacturer in the industry, or a lean, hard competitor.4 Despite its seeming fuzziness, the manager's vision has a very practical application. It provides a lot of information about the numerous goals compressed into a single main image that shapes the day-to-day responses of the manager and decision-making guide. Pharmaceutical executive put it this way: One of the rules that I learned to know at the bottom of my soul is that it is I'm trying to achieve, so that I can take advantage of the opportunities when they come along. In other words, managers should not be limited to things that carry directly and directly for long-term purposes. Instead, guided by the vision, the manager can shape his direct activities so that they are all directed in the same general direction. To sum up, even when managers create their visions, the business environment is constantly changing. There is a saying that says when you're up to your ears in alligators, it's hard to remember that your original goal was to drain the swamp. How, then, how, then, how can a manager, seeking, say, create a new corporate culture achieve this goal by facing such alligators as moving the department to new offices or solving the unexpected loss of an important contract? The answer is, climbing the hillside every now and then to look around: assess the achievements, see how much work is left, even to make sure that draining the swamp is still important. For one CEO, the process works this way: When the topic is discussed, I tend to say: Is this relevant to the larger problem we're talking about? And I love things like that. Then one day I sit down, collect my notes from three or four different meetings, and I go through them and try to extract things that tell a story; I'm looking for a holistic template. It helps jelly my thinking. Senior managers are often involved in this summing up of activities, stopping to consolidate what they know and identify areas of confusion. Generalization has a number of advantages. Most obviously, this gives managers an opportunity to rethink their goals and ideas in the light of new information. And, as with the CEO, it helps them build their mental map, which helps them interpret ambiguous events and ultimately act on them. In addition, by helping managers organize disparate data into a small number of packages, the generalization process reduces their cognitive burden. People can only think about so many things at one time, and effective managers skillfully collapse the issues they face in the category. Finally guarantee managers from losing the sense of direction that the vision supports. Supports. that they will eventually be consolidating, summing up and sorting through ideas and information, managers can confidently give the full will of their creativity and innovation that might otherwise pull them off course. Models and category managers determine when a generalization help them combine problems to save action, meaning they take advantage of unexpected opportunities to make progress on several issues that they mentally relate to each other. One manager told me how he had used the problem branch several times: My imaginary goal was to discuss budgetary issues, but they were accidental. I took the opportunity to get into the issue of interpersonal conflict in the industry. The branch manager raised this issue, and when it happened, I went with him. It may seem like I was jumping around, but for me it made sense; I was waiting for this window to open to get into what I wanted to discuss. Or consider a daily to-do list. Many managers naturally organize their tasks into mental categories, a practice that helps them remember the dozens of things they have to perform every day. Indeed, the process of compiling a to-do list illustrates a mini-version of strategic opportunism: listing pressing problems, the manager thinks opportunistically, and, touching these problems with broad categories, the manager to take stock and keep in mind the big picture. One consequence of this opportunistic method of work is that managers can be particularly effective when their agendas are overflowing. Managers usually carry a bit of extra work in their mental portfolios, jobs that they don't have to finish right away, but that they are willing to deal with if the opportunity arises if they recognize the opportunity. Part of the manager's mental card consists of these low-level items: errands to run, questions to see people about, and so on. The effectiveness of wearing such overcrowded portfolios is obvious when two managers with rich agendas meet. Suppose the vice president of operations meets the plant manager in the hallway; The vice president learns how the new production manager works, while the manager gets an informal reading about production goals next month. Everyone walks away from a chance meeting with several lower priorities fulfilled. These kinds of interactions are inexpensive; The only cost to the manager is to keep things straight. As one executive commented: You see someone, but it's not necessary when it's on your mind, so you should try to remember all that stuff. But remembering things should not be left at random. Indeed, the habits of thinking that I have described -- collecting creating vision, summing-up-help managers remember everything they need to do so they can take advantage meetings and discoveries that occur during the day. Without an plan, managers cannot respond to unforeseen circumstances if their activities are planned too carefully or too far in advance. Recognizing that the situation in their company is constantly changing, many managers have learned to leave strategic gaps in their plans - planned timeouts to re-evaluate situations and reformulate actions, goals or even mission statements. For the same reason, they often avoid over-detailing their long-term goals. Some less experienced managers, on the other hand, act as if they first identify all their goals and then take those goals into action. Then and only then, in their opinion, they are ready to take action. But some facts of life undermine this textbook approach to planning. One is that business conditions are changing, and a goal that was appropriate just a few weeks ago may not be appropriate today. Consider a six-step plan. The implementation of the first stage is based on all available modern knowledge, but the sixth phase will be based only on earlier information, earlier assumptions about the future situation and earlier projections of the consequences of one to five steps. Even if the business situation has not changed during this time, the manager's perspective will certainly be different. The manager's views on what goals are desirable and feasible may change; he or she can develop a better understanding of obstacles or acquire more skills. As a result, frequent timeouts that allow managers to pause and reassess are an important component of management in changing environments. In some circumstances, leaders can deliver this principle to the extreme by taking action before committing to any plan at all. This course can be wise, especially in situations of high uncertainty. A manager in the new high-tech industry decided to abandon any semblance of an official business plan until he had some experience with technology. His refusal to plan was not based on ignorance; he rated technology and markets as promising, but believes that there are so many unknowns that any multi-year plan would be an empty academic event. Seeing the early risks as minor, he decided to enter the business gradually, taking on one modest contract that could be easily handled by studying this experience, and gradually building the company's technological knowledge and business experience until he could formulate complex, realistic plans. A few years ago, another company chose a similar course on receiving personal computers with which it had no experience. Instead of doing extensive analysis The CEO of the company just bought a dozen PCs and handed them out randomly all over the office. Several employees received received Training and started experimenting with potential applications computers were fully utilized within a few weeks. The CEO's approach did lead to some confusion at first, but it gave the company the experience needed for a more systematic approach later in introducing personal computers to other parts of the operation. The seeming simplicity of this deliberate lack of planning is, of course, deceptive. The decisions of these managers were based on a complex understanding of their business and an equally sophisticated understanding of what they did not know. It's one thing when an experienced manager says, We'll cross this bridge when we get to it, and quite another for a beginner. A qualified manager has a wide repertoire of analytical and intuitive skills needed to deal with unexpected at every stage of a plan or unplanned as it may be. Linked to goals Many managers complain that short-term problems are wreaking havoc in their plans to address really important management issues. Unfortunately, they too often accuse themselves or their subordinates of poor planning skills. However, one of the reasons that urgent issues lead to important ones is the basic fact of human thinking: important and bright objects occupy a disproportionate amount of our attention and distort our thinking in the direction of what is noticed, rather than what is remarkable. So how do managers deal with timely and urgent issues, with larger issues in mind - tasks that are not immediately available but which are vital in the long run? To achieve this, I have found many to develop a self-in-force system, tricks that force them to make progress towards important goals. To give one simple example, they use tickler files to eventually solve problems that might otherwise get lost in the shuffle. Another simple must-use is scheduling. The Director-General of one of the divisions, frustrated by the poor planning of his subordinates, created a calendar that lists all the meetings of divisions and corporations that his managers had to prepare for throughout the year. Calendar is a philosophy of no excuses; all leaders knew in advance which meetings they should attend and which of them they were to contribute to. The same manager used a calendar trick to force himself as well as his executive committee to offend the factory units one day each month: If it wasn't for a regularly scheduled meeting, I wouldn't get out of mine and at the factory and neither most of the other committee members. I have to do it to discipline myself. In other words, while managers are trying to maintain as much flexibility as possible for unexpected, they often balance this flexibility with rigid systems to manage their own limitations. Any mental device they can use to make the long-term more immediate and tangible help them focus on the noteworthy. That is why vision - a bright and convincing image of the future of the company - is so important in linking short-term and long-term problems. Piecing Puzzle Traditional Theory suggests that management is a tightly structured, systematic, linear mental activity. Managers presumably formulate goals with painstaking precision and then take carefully prescribed actions. In fact, however, as one company president pointed out, managers never have enough information to make perfectly informed decisions: I think what you find when you go out into the cold, violent world of business is that you never have all the information, and there's always a bunch of facts missing. The manager is always faced with getting puzzle pieces without ever having all the answers you need, and at the same time having to make decisions. Therefore, managers often begin the process of solving problems not by carefully collecting solid data, but by thinking about the incomplete information they already have, either in their memory or at hand. I had to make judgments about things where I didn't have enough time to learn all the technology involved, said one general manager. So I had to start relying on other people's opinions. I learned that you can reach a point where you realize 75% or 80% pretty quickly; Get to 100% is not worth the effort it takes. I've been involved in management long enough to know that there's no certainty. Effective management thus becomes an iterative process based on constant interrogation, experimentation, reflection, debugging, and retesting. Many senior managers have learned, for example, that the order in which they perform their most important functions of thinking - goal-making, understanding, planning and action - is not so important. What is really important is that all of these functions are performed, that managers develop an understanding of products and markets, that over time they formulate goals that are clear enough to guide the allocation of resources, but that they themselves can change, and that they take appropriate and timely action. This relentless reflection on the part of managers often takes the form of what cognitive scientists call reasoning believable, or make logical guesses. Instead of waiting for all the facts to come to them, senior managers try to interpret new issues and problems as they arise. Why does a potential business partner seem to cool down? There's a message that an expediter product is called-could be a problem with shipping or price? Why is the product coming back? And as the president of the metal parts department wondered, what's on the boss's mind? The boss called to say he would be dropping tomorrow. I thought why he comes in and what approach he will take. I think he's him. Make cuts He will insist that we need to be more profitable. He wants us to look good because it's easier to sell the company when it's profitable. Another example of plausible reasoning can be seen in the reflections of the general manager of the branch, who for eight months could not fill a small order. Problem: another division of the company did not provide the necessary part. The general manager said: It makes it worse because we need business. Here we had an opportunity, and we are seven, eight months old, and we can't deliver the part. I believe that product separation has a role. What I think they do is highlight all the products for one major customer. I am going to ask the product manager to skim some from the big order and send me a trickle of that. Then I can get something for the customer now, and maybe buy a few more weeks to get the rest of the order. It is obvious that managers who rely solely on speculation risk making false conclusions and taking inappropriate action. But experienced managers have learned to combine conclusions with solid rationality. They are convenient, using guesswork and guesswork as the basis for deciding whether a particular problem requires systematic analysis. The courageous development of professional management education at the beginning of this century was an attempt to make managers more systematic, more scientific. Recent criticism of strategic planning suggests that we management scientists may be overworking this goal. My research shows that what managers need is a synthesis of rationality and entrepreneurial (or opportunistic) resourcefulness. Strategic opportunism is a way to get closer to the complex, uncertain task of managing both creatively and rigorously. Several management writers have recently pointed out that many practitioners have long known - descriptions of streamlined governance processes are unrealistic and misleading. Robert Hayes, for his part, argues that it is often more effective to develop resources, competencies and strategies in stages, iteratively, than to apply a traditional approach to goal-making, then strategies and then resources. Other work on topics as diverse as product development and transfer pricing also highlighted the effectiveness of adopting a non-linear, dynamic approach to management functions.5 Thinking both strategically and opportunistically is clearly not easy. It requires tolerance for ambiguity, intellectual intensity, mental fuss and a watchful eye on new ideas. In other words, in order to boldly sin requires a rigid approach to the initially messy process, the ability to take action in the face of uncertainty. This approach to management can anger some managers who are struggling to think strategically themselves or harder yet drive strategic strategic deep into their own corporate culture. However, there is nothing undisciplined or howl about strategic opportunism. On the contrary, it takes a lot of intellectual courage to be open to new opportunities and engage in reflexive research rather than rationalization. And what purpose is rigidity? Leaders who are afraid to choose opportunities rather than outdated goals are really afraid of themselves; deep inside they doubt their ability to function in the face of uncertainty, creativity and resourcefulness, their own determination and willpower. In its inherent promiscuity, strategic opportunism requires a lot not only from the top manager, but also from subordinate managers, who should be able to tolerate work with a smooth set of agendas. Subordinates with a high need for clarity and control will find the constant experiments of a strategic opportunist a disappointment, not a release. While the storm manager's day-to-day may seem aimless, the direction becomes clear in retrospect - two or three or five years later. One manager was reminded of an astronaut who was sent to make repairs on a spaceship: You look at this guy in his spacesuit, zooming back and forth on this little space gadget. You see a surge of energy, but you don't see patterns. After that, you know, yes, he went out there and fixed something, but when he's on the move, it's hard to understand the logic of what he's doing. The CEO has a vision that is semi-intuitive. He walks on several fronts at the same time, pushing out his holistic vision. Gradually, the blur disappears. The fictional conversation between Detective Dashiel Hammett, Henry F. Neal, and his girlfriend Dina Brand, reflects the essence of strategic opportunism. Henry vowed to rid the small town of corruption, and Dina just asked him why he sparked a battle between two rival factions in the city. It was just an experiment - just to see what would happen. So that's how you do science detectives work. My god! For a fat, middle-aged, hard-boiled, pig-headed guy, you have a vague way of doing things I've ever heard of. Plans are all right sometimes, I said, and sometimes just stirring things up all right if you're tough enough to survive, and keep your eyes open so you can see what you want when it comes to the top. This should be good for another drink. 6 version of this article was published in the March 1987 issue of Harvard Business Review. Reviews. tactical planning process tbs. tactical planning process steps. tactical planning process pdf. tactical planning process meaning. tactical planning process definition. military tactical planning process. strategic and tactical planning process. nato tactical planning process

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