



McKINNA *et al*
Strategic Insight
Global Outlook

Painless strategic planning

The annual strategic planning process is something that the management team dreads - they simply don't have time for it and find it frustrating. Most companies don't realise strategic planning is a specialised process that **can** and **should** be outsourced, because, in addition to time savings, a fresh set of eyes brings:

- Objectivity and balance.
- A 'reality check' on internal myths.
- Learnings from outside your own industry sector.
- High level thinking that is not always available in-house.

Over 25 years, McKINNA *et al* has perfected a painless strategic planning process that delivers a clearly articulated, actionable strategic plan in less than 4 weeks.

"I've done many of these strategic planning sessions and wasn't looking forward to yet another. This has been the only one with a logical process that has delivered a clear outcome."

Darral Ashton
Chairman
Batlow Apple Cooperative



To see a better way ... **try a fresh set of eyes**

Strategy checklist

Does your strategic plan pass the following check list:

Is it really strategic? 

Is it based on a rational assessment of the organisation's competitive advantages and weaknesses in the context of global opportunities, threats and challenges?

Is it focused? 


Does it focus on the handful of triggers which if implemented effectively, will best position the organisation to outdo competitors and achieve its goals.

Is it objective? 


Is it free from management bias or internal myths? Is there an external reality check?

Are the goals clearly stated and measurable? 

Can the steps to each goal be measured or is it simply a wish list?

Does it provide a road map? 

Does it indicate 'who needs to do what' to make it happen?

Is it aspirational? 

Does it paint a vision of where the organisation could be in three years time? Does it inspire the team and stretch them to aim high?

Is it reflected in everything we do? 

Do the business unit plans and staff KPIs link to the same goals? Is progress reviewed at every board or management meeting? Is it part of the culture?

Can it be simply communicated? 

Is the intention of the plan understood by people at the coal face who don't talk in management jargon? Can you explain it in a few words or on one page?

If you answered **NO** to any of these questions ... **you don't have an effective strategic plan**

"Most companies believe that they have a strategy. Unfortunately . . . the "strategy" is all too often simply a financial goal. There is no clear direction, no statement of how the company intends to differentiate itself or action plan. The McKINNA process has been developed so that a company can rapidly understand what is significant and then construct a succinct set of strategies to address these."

Mike Reed
Partner
Oliver Wight

Why most strategic plans fail

Strategic planning for most companies involves taking the board or management team off-site for a two day retreat with a facilitator. Such facilitators usually have 'talking sticks' and butcher's paper but rarely have strategy expertise. Although the facilitator may be adept at chairing the meeting, this process does not usually produce sound strategy because:

- Most facilitators don't understand strategy.
- Most managers don't understand strategy.
- Few managers have the perspective of more than one industry.
- Ideas tend to be introspective and are not challenged.
- The same old 'corporate myths' surface each year without being challenged.
- Every organisation believes it is at the cutting edge and is invincible.

"Ultimate excellence lies not in winning every battle, but in defeating the enemy without even fighting."

Sun tzu
Ancient Chinese Strategist
The Art of War

Elements of an effective strategy

Strategy is a practised discipline, conceived by the military e.g. *"What is the best way to invade an alien territory given our limited resources and the capabilities of our formidable enemy?"* Good strategy is highly tactical, has a competitive focus and demands:

- Good quality intelligence.
- An understanding of existing capability, competitive advantage and threats.
- The insight to accurately forecast trends.
- A sharp focus on the handful of actions that will achieve most results.

Having the smartest and most knowledgeable industry experts sitting around a blank white board won't produce an effective strategy unless it follows a process. *McKINNA et al* has over many years perfected this process.

The McKINNA *et al* method

The McKINNA *et al* strategy method is a proven step-by-step approach with a component of customised prior research and analysis so that we bring a framework and process to the workshop session rather than blank butcher's paper.

The 7 steps are:

1. Familiarisation and briefing

The briefing is usually with the CEO or chairman and allows us to gain a clear understanding of the high level objectives so that the process can be best tailored to your needs.

2. Independent Assessment

- Executive Engagement
- Competitor Analysis
- Sector Outlook
- Future Scan

Our market analysis team will conduct an independent assessment of your strategic situation and the market environment. This will involve a stage of prior research and engagement.

3. Strategy Map

- Objective situational analysis
- Competitive threats
- External drivers/blockers
- Core competencies
- Emerging opportunities
- Performance issue identification

The strategy map forms the basis of the workshop agenda. It presents our independent review and poses the questions that will stimulate thinking and steer the group through the planning process. The map is designed to pinpoint the driving strategic issues and the appropriate actions to address them. It is carefully structured to meld McKINNA *et al* insights with the collective organisational knowledge and wisdom.

4. Workshop

A one or two day workshop is conducted off-site to avoid distraction. This is not a holiday – our process requires intense concentration. Two experienced consultants guide the group enabling us to focus the discussion as well as accurately record the outcomes. Some relaxed philosophical discussion between sessions is encouraged.

5. Draft Plan

The output from the workshop is captured in a draft plan. This draft applies further judgement on the issues raised during the workshop so that it captures the winning strategies.

6. Road Test

The draft plan is circulated to the board or management team for their input then McKINNA *et al* convene a meeting on site to debate directions.

7. Final Plan

The feedback from the road test meeting is taken on board to produce a polished plan to guide the organisation to greater heights.

The McKINNA *et al* method is fast and painless usually taking around 4 weeks. The methodology is always customised to suit team capability, budgets and organisational needs. It has never failed to produce a highly effective strategy.

For more information contact Dr David McKinna.

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