

Create a Dynamic Strategic Plan that Engages the Enterprise

Having a strategic plan is a vital aspect of any successful organization. Unfortunately, most organizations have strategic plans that are really financial plans in disguise.

Profits are only one element of a strategic plan. You need a plan that outlines what you're going to do to differentiate yourself from your competitors and one that details your innovation strategies. Those key elements are often missing in a financially focused strategic plan.

Thorough strategic planning also looks at how you gain new competitive advantages and other broader concepts that accelerate growth beyond a financially focused plan. Therefore, your strategic planning needs to be a mix of financial planning, strategy-focused planning, long-range planning using research to determine future positions, and tactical planning to determine your execution strategies.

"Failing to plan is planning to fail." That saying is true for companies today, which is why having a strategic plan is essential. It's important to build change into the plan and have the ability to adapt it in real time.

Dynamic versus Static Planning

These days, a traditional static plan is less desirable and less effective than a dynamic plan. The difference is a static plan is a document that is published, shared with key employees, and then filed away. A dynamic plan goes beyond one-way informing and communicates the plan in a two-way, ongoing dialogue to everyone in the enterprise. It's a living, breathing, and evolving entity engaging everyone. In short:

A dynamic strategic plan is a two-way dialogue that communicates with the company leaders and the employees.

A dynamic strategic plan reaches beyond the company walls and goes out to strategic partners.

A dynamic strategic plan is continually refined and improved by eliciting dialogue and input from others.

These three points are crucial; with a typical static strategic plan, people may not have time to read it or agree with it, so they may not take action. If they find major flaws in the plan, there is no means to provide risk-free feedback.

A dynamic strategic plan allows communication with people and encourages feedback. You're not telling people the plan; you're showing them the plan and asking for their help with identifying foreseeable challenges, solving problems before they occur.

Here are some hallmarks of a dynamic strategic plan:

Break it down. Long lists are rarely completed. It's important to highlight and break down the plan into its basic elemental strategic imperatives so everyone identifies with them. If these go unknown, they won't be accomplished. Allow the plan to stay top of mind. When it's top of mind every day, people will know what the strategic imperatives are and are more likely to attain them.

Tell stories. Bring the words of your company's strategic plan to life by making it visual. If you've never seen the visual of what $E=mc^2$ means, then you still don't understand Einstein's theory of relativity.

However, those who see it in a visual format understand it. A strategic plan can be complex and just as hard to understand, so some companies create an infographic that depicts the plan, printing it on a banner and hanging it in a main gathering area as a visual reminder of the plan.

Go multimedia. While your dynamic strategic plan could be a document, it could also be a video that people watch or an interactive game they play. Some people prefer to watch a video, while others prefer to play an interactive game. The people who prefer to watch the video wonder why anyone would play a game, and those who prefer to play a game wonder why anyone would sit through a video. Since we all learn in different ways, it only makes sense to put the strategic plan in various formats.

Get social. Social media is an ideal way to make a strategic plan dynamic. The key word to remember is “social.” It’s about creating engagement and involvement. For example, as employees execute the plan, you can create Instagram stories using pictures of success, accomplishments, and roadblocks in an effort to gain feedback and ideas. Additionally, you can be using internal online collaborative tools to work with the different groups executing the plan so help can be provided if need be. A dynamic strategic plan breaks down barriers and gets everyone headed in the same direction.

Gain Engagement

Today, truly successful and innovative companies have a dynamic strategic plan in motion. They have a document that can be added to and refined with graphics, video, and interactive media. They have something that’s moving.

Leaders need to engage people with their plans rather than inform them of their plans.

With the rapid pace of change, the traditional static planning system is a dinosaur. Now is the time to redefine what a strategic plan is supposed to be—dynamic.



About the Author:

DANIEL BURRUS is considered one of the world’s leading technology forecasters and innovation experts, and is the founder and CEO of [Burrus Research](#), a research and consulting firm that monitors global advancements in technology driven trends to help clients understand how technological, social and business forces are converging to create enormous untapped opportunities. He is the author of six books including The New York Times best seller [Flash Foresight](#). This article is reprinted with permission. Reproduction without permission is strictly prohibited. For reprint permission, contact Burrus Research, Inc. at office@burrus.com.



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