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**HOW TO DEVELOP STRATEGY**

A leader’s job is comprised of making decisions. Big ones and little ones,

and they all add up like drops of water in a rushing river. If you don’t stop

to consider how these decisions all contribute to the momentum and

direction of the river you could be heading wrong direction fast.

In a world of accelerated change, making good decisions faster is paramount. I help my clients get clear about the decisions they need to

make personally as well as the decisions they have to facilitate in a team

environment.

At the heart of this process is remembering one simple fact:

***HOW you do something matters as much as WHAT you do.***

***How*** is ultimately about strategy. Strategic thinking and smart strategic

process is essential to making good decisions. What follows is my strategy blueprint for making better decisions faster. Use this anytime you’re facing a problem and you need to think through how best to solve it, as well as align and mobilize others to join you. This could apply to a major year-long initiative or even a smaller project that needs buy-in from others. Just fill out the questions below.

This is an upfront time investment that can pay off in big ways.

1. **Background *(Why are we having this conversation?)***

Set the necessary context, this could be a brief situational

analysis including possible threats or challenges, opportunities,

or recent failures that make this necessary.

1. **Objectives *(What do we want to accomplish?)***

Consider setting up near term, mid-term, and long-term goals.

What can you realistically achieve in 1 month, 3 months, 6 months, 1 year, and 18 months. (Sometimes objectives don’t lend themselves to timelines). Set actual dates, rather than time frames (i.e. By September 3rd, etc.)

1. **Strategy *(How We Plan to Accomplish the Objectives?)***

Sometimes there are several good ways to achieve the

objectives; you may decide to give options. Detail the pros and

cons associated with each strategy. Try to name the strategy if

you can. If you have a recommendation, name it and why.

1. **Structure *(What Framework Supports the Strategy?)***

How do we need to organize to be effective? What kind of staffing is required? What authorities are needed or need to be clarified projected costs if any, etc. You may decide to give several options with pros and cons for each. If you have a recommendation, name it and your reasoning.

1. **Process *(What Actions in what order need to be taken?)***

What are the big decision points, action items along the way, what order do they need to happen in? Who do you need buy in from? What is a realistic date or time frame for each to occur? Who is responsible? Use bullet points, or a table like the one below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ACTION ITEM/DECISION POINT | RESPONSIBILITY | DUE DATE |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

1. **The Implications of Not Taking Action [OPTIONAL]**

This is good when you feel quite a lot of urgency to bring about

change but stakeholders may not see the need, or if you haven’t

been asked to develop a strategy, but you are recommending a

change.

***[Use the next two if you are building strategy for people above]***

1. **What I Understand Leadership Expects of Me**

Detail your understanding of your authority, mandate, and accountabilities. In some ways this may read a bit like a job description. Here you’re seeking to get alignment for what you are truly responsible for. Alternatively, you could frame this as a set of “offers” things you want to do, believe add value, and know you are good at.

1. **What I Need from Leadership to Be Successful**

Detail any requests you have of leadership to achieve this. Could

be more clarity on authority, or a request for more staff, or bigger

budget, etc. Don’t be afraid to ask for what you need.