Development Suggestions for Strategic Thinking

Suggested Readings

Title	Author/Publisher	Learning Mode
Enlightened Leadership	Oakley, Ed and Doug Krug/ 1991/ Simon & Schuster	Book
Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change	William Bridges / 2003 / Perseus Publishing	Book
Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap….and Others Don't	Jim Collins/ 2001/ Harper Business	Book + AudioCD
Reframing Organization: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership	Bolman, Lee G. and Terrence E. Deal/ 2003/ Jossey-Bass	Book
Govleaders.org	http://govleaders.org/index.html	Online magazine

Activities

1. When implementing a new system or process, track the impact on your organization. Consider the following questions:

   − Who will be involved in tracking the systems impact?
   − What resources, training, or other support will they need?
   − Who are the best sources of information on the systems impacts?
   − How can I include those who already resist the change?
   − How will coordination and communication be managed?
   − What method of tracking will be used?
   − How will I develop solutions to issues and follow through on actions?

2. Create a resource allocation matrix to help you identify and match required skill sets, specific people, materials, and/or equipment to support organization strategy.

3. Create a matrix that helps you determine the degree to which projects and/or key areas align with your organization's strategies. Use the following process:

   a. List the projects or key areas in the left column of the matrix.
   b. List your organization's strategic initiatives across the top of the matrix.
   c. Use a pre-determined rating scale (e.g., +/-, high to low, 1 to 5) and rate the degree of alignment and relation of the projects/key areas to the initiatives.
   d. Identify the projects/key areas that are directly aligned and support each initiative, those that are somewhat aligned, and those that are not aligned or related to a strategic initiative.

   Of those projects/key areas you've identified as somewhat or not related to an initiative, determine which offer you the greatest opportunity to increase alignment.

4. Conduct a Gap Analysis to help you determine where you want to be in the future, how that picture is different from where you are now, and how to get there.

5. Think about what would help you develop and maintain people's trust in your leadership during the change. Make a list of the specific ways in which you can show your concern about people and then follow them.

Tips

1. Monitor current domestic and global events and assess how they might impact the work of your organization.

2. Develop a set of annual goals for your team; set interim goals and due dates. Each month, revisit the goals to check accomplishments. Post accomplishments for team members to see.

3. Obtain and analyze the organization's strategic plan, goals, and mission before you formulate any plans for your department. Make sure they are aligned.

4. Use the group's core values in making decisions and clarifying choices.

5. Celebrate team accomplishments, even the milestones.

6. Talk to your employees about what they can do to achieve the organization's mission and goals.

7. Meet with employees to show them how their contributions support the organization's goals.

8. Analyze the organization's strategic plan and the organizational team's strategic goals and mission before you formulate any plans for your department. Make sure they are aligned.

9. Develop constructive coping skills, such as time management strategies, reframing issues in cognitive rather than emotional terms, and breaking problems down and addressing them in bits rather than all at once.

10. Invite contributions from others, and be willing to listen and discuss their ideas.

11. Make a habit of thinking "outside the box." Look for novel and nontraditional solutions.

12. View an obstacle as an opportunity to find a new approach.

13. Read to stay abreast of sociopolitical, economic, and technological trends that may affect the future direction the company will take in responding to society's needs. Share this information with colleagues.

14. Learn what values and principles are behind your organization's rules, policies, and procedures. This knowledge will guide you in knowing when to be flexible regarding a rule, policy, or procedure in order to get the desired results, but still align you with the organization's value system.

15. Consider how you have adapted to change in the past year. Are you flexible and willing to change, or do you tend to continue to do business as usual?

16. See plans and schedules as means to an end, not as ends in themselves. They should help, not hinder or restrict.

17. Develop multiple contingency plans so you are not locked into any single course of action.

18. Consider using a team approach to problem solving. Use the team to structure or define the problem and to brainstorm solutions.

19. Create a climate for change by demonstrating to employees a willingness to experiment with new ideas, and avoid behaviors that stifle departures from the status quo.

20. Before making a decision, establish checkpoints that will be used to assess the continuing success of the decision, the downside risks at each point, and potential alternative strategies. This way, if the downside risks materialize, an alternative strategy can be adopted relatively early.

21. Hold feedback meetings to allow employees to express their feelings about how change is going.

22. Listen to and ask for a lot of advice in change situations.

23. Develop multiple contingency plans so that you are not locked into any single course of action.

24. Evaluate the results of any change after it has been implemented.

25. Talk to your employees! Meet with each employee individually to glean information about how the change is affecting each person.

26. Be alert for signs that would indicate the need for a change in strategy. Create feedback measures to evaluate progress.

27. Treat resistance to change as a problem to be solved, not as a character flaw.

28. Allow people to talk about their feelings, especially when they feel they are losing something to the change.

29. Tell people what you think change will mean for them, and listen to their reactions.

30. Hold regular meetings with your team to keep them informed and up to date on changes as appropriate.

31. Be honest.

32. During times of broad organizational change, be available to your people to ask what you can do to make the transition easier on them.

33. Hold regular meetings with your team to keep them informed of changes. Be sure to show how the changes will benefit the team.

34. Present change as an opportunity for growth. Bring in a senior manager as a motivational speaker who can also answer team members' questions.

35. Create temporary solutions to keep processes running as smoothly as possible until true alignment can occur. Use the acronym "PIPE," when thinking of temporary solutions to the impact on organizational systems.

    – **P**olicies and procedures
    – **I**nformation handling
    – **P**eople
    – **E**quipment/space