



Coming Out of the Economic Trough with Strategic Planning

By Hal Johnson

The last two years have been some of the toughest any of us have seen in our entire careers. So, what's next? More struggles? More economic woes? No one knows exactly, but what we do know is that we can do something about getting what we want rather than taking what we get.

...and that's what Strategic Planning is all about.

The better the planning and execution, the better the likelihood you will get the results you want.

The really progressive companies that have survived the economic onslaught are now *toning up* to take advantage of the predicted recovery – when it happens. In other words, they'll be prepared to seize every possible business advantage and opportunity they can.

Get the message? If you are not prepared, the competition is coming after your lunch.

There's no better preparation than a robust strategic planning process—under the guidance of our skilled LeadershipOne team.

LeadershipOne begins the process with a comprehensive *situation analysis* that helps examine how you're doing in the following essential performance categories:

PEOPLE - Attract and sustain talented people learning and growing.

SYSTEMS - Achieve excellence through internal business processes.

CUSTOMER - Attract and retain customers by exceeding their needs and expectations.

FINANCIAL - Achieve financial goals including growth and profitability.

CULTURE - Achieve an environment of respect, teamwork and motivated performance.

MANAGEMENT - Achieve high productivity with trained manager-leaders using *best business practices*.

In addition, a SWOT analysis gives us the kind of information we need to complete this portion of the planning process. Further, we conduct one-on-one interviews with the members of the senior management team, exploring in more depth the survey responses.

All this leads to the management/leadership team's facilitated strategy meeting to review the *situation analysis* and set goals. But it shouldn't and doesn't end there. Many businesses fail to get the full benefit from their strategic planning process.

The missing ingredient? The most neglected phase of the planning process is the lack of systematic execution – with a comprehensive **Action Plan**. Execution is critical. All too often, a strategic planning process results in a half-dozen lofty goals that, upon review a year later, are not fully realized. And, this is our specialty.

Conclusion

Successful business leaders find ways to enable their businesses to create predictable success; to get what they want, not just take what they get. Your job as manager-leaders is to create predictable success. History has shown a well developed and implemented (that's the Action Plan) process increases the probability for success.

If you'd like to engage in a comprehensive and effective Strategic Planning process, please give us a call. We would be delighted to share from our knowledge and experience to help you get the best business results out of 2010.

Here's to brighter days ahead. A good start is a good plan!

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