

Develop Your Strategic Thinking Mindset - *Or Else!!*

Strengthening HR's Value by Developing Your Strategic Thinking Mindset



With Jeff Russell

A photograph of a sunset over the ocean. The sky is filled with vibrant colors of orange, red, and purple. In the foreground, there are dark silhouettes of hills and a bay with several sailboats. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, sans-serif font.

If you don't know where
you're going . . .

Any road will get you
there.

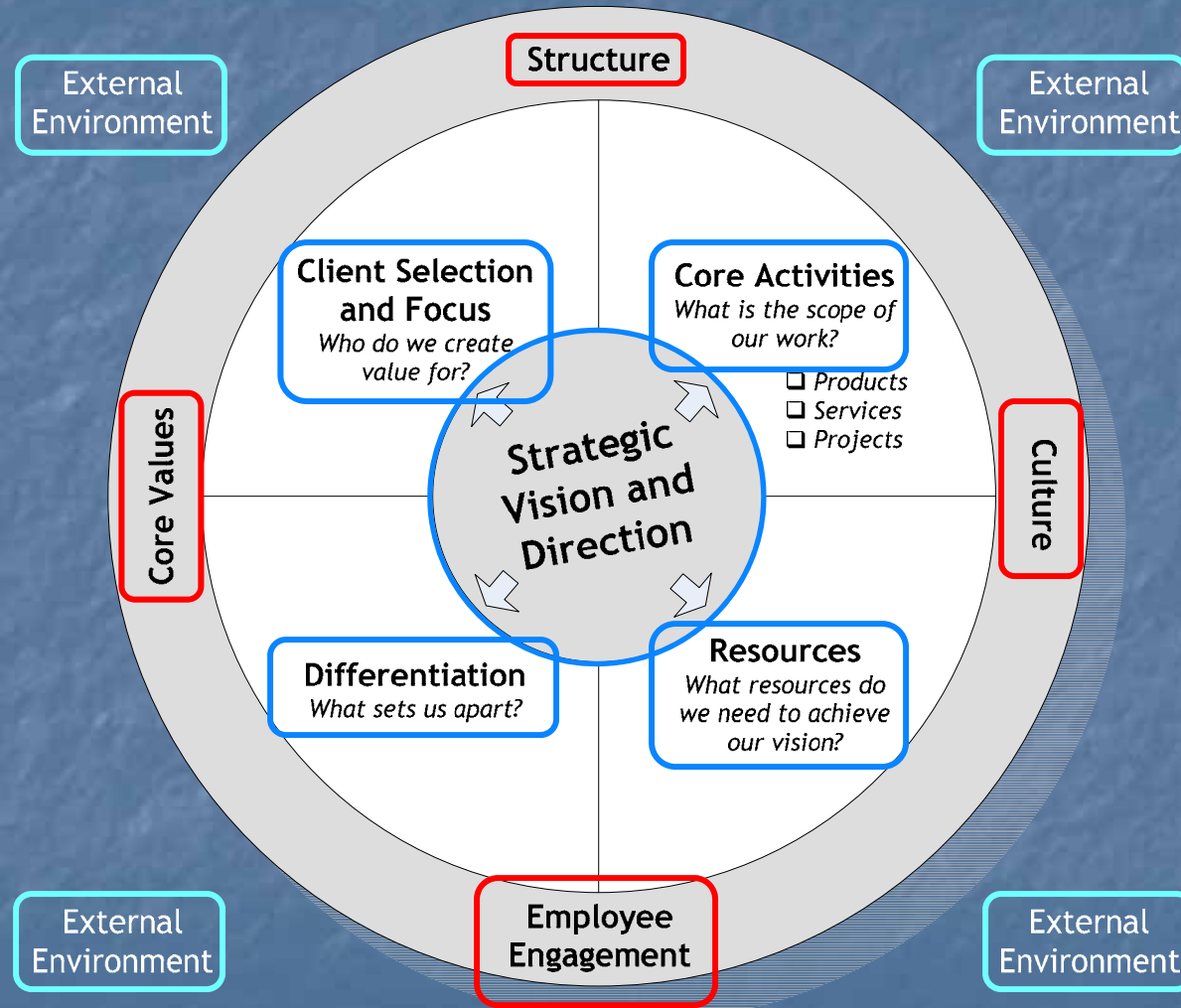
Concordia Sunset - St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands

Insanity . . .

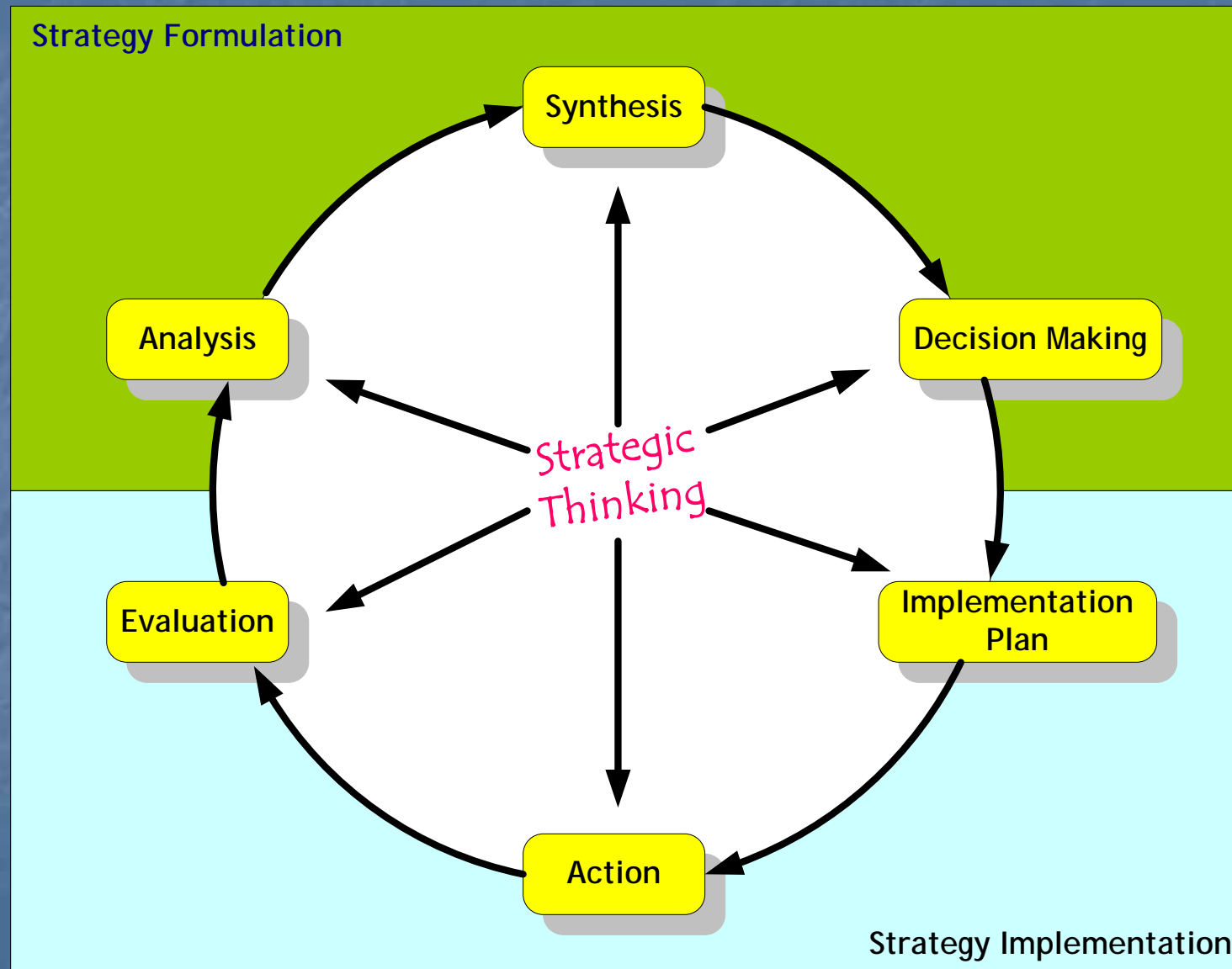
Repeatedly doing
the same things
in the same way
and expecting
different results.



A Strategic Thinking/Planning Framework



Strategic Thinking and Strategy Formulation and Implementation



Strategic Thinking for HR Is . . .

A way of examining and understanding your organization's circumstances within a **larger context** which, in turn, enables you to identify, understand, and **proactively engage current and emerging issues** that are likely to have a significant **strategic impact** on your organization's success.

Strategic Thinking's Context

- The purpose or aim of the organization - *What are we here to accomplish or create in the world?* For HR: Do I understand the business?
- The purpose, role, and value of the person's work contribution - *How do I personally contribute to the organization's larger purpose? What am I here to accomplish or create?* For HR: *What is HR's value? [What is my value?]*
- The core guiding values described in the strategic plan - *What core values should guide every decision and action I make in my work?* For HR: *How will these values influence my HR decisions?*

Strategic Thinking's Context

- The current and future needs of his/her customers - *What do my customers/clients expect of me today? How are my customers' needs changing and why? For HR: How are my customers' general and HR needs changing?*
- What is occurring in the organization's environment - *What forces and trends within and outside of the company are likely to affect my or the company's future effectiveness and success? For HR: What HR/business trends reflect my potential future?*

Strategic Thinking

Strategic thinking involves . . .

1. Holding an image of the vision or ideal future in one's mind.
2. Drawing upon and being shaped by the organization's core values.
3. Being awake and aware - continuously scanning the environment — looking for opportunities and threats.

Strategic Thinking

4. Seeing the patterns and relationships in events and circumstances.
5. Recognizing the interconnections and interdependencies before making decisions and taking action.
6. Making decisions and taking actions for the long-term that are shaped by the vision, core values, awareness of the environment, and awareness of the interdependencies.

A photograph of a misty lake with a forested island in the background. The foreground is filled with reeds and rocks. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

Control your destiny . . . Or somebody else will!
— Jack Welch, former CEO
General Electric

HR Thinking/Planning/Action Levels . . .

<i>Level</i>	<i>Desired Result</i>	<i>Style of Action</i>	<i>Underlying Value/Key Question</i>	<u>Current</u> % of Time	<u>Desired</u> % of Time
Strategic	Helping the organization achieve an ideal future. Optimizing desired long-term outcomes given internal resources and environmental constraints.	Future-minded, long-term focus. Exploring alternative HR possibilities and pathways to achieve success and tackle critical issues.	<i>Controlled</i> instability toward a larger purpose. Leveraging opportunities. <i>What's next for HR?</i>		
Interactive	Exceeding expectations. Going above and beyond. Anticipating HR needs and problems.	Proactive. Getting out in front of things. Never being surprised.	Continuous learning and quality improvement. <i>What am I learning today that should change my HR practice tomorrow?</i>		
Operational	Maintaining the status quo. Ensuring consistency. Controlling/guaranteeing results. Developing good HR systems that translate strategic plans into action.	Short-term focus. Fixes problems. Maintains smooth operation. Strives for operational excellence.	Stability and Control. <i>How do I keep things going along as smoothly as possible?</i>		
Tactical	Meeting expectations. Solving daily HR problems. Responding immediately to emerging issues. Delivering HR value!	Reactive. Short-term focus. Getting results today.	Surviving! Making it through another day! <i>What must I do right now to solve today's problems?</i>		

100% 100%

Developing a Strategic Mindset

1. Expect HR staffers to be strategic thinkers - make it part of their hiring, orientation, and development.
2. Build strategic thinking into every HR job description.
3. Integrate the vision and core values into HR planning and goal setting processes.
4. Invite HR staff members to share/discuss what they are learning from customers and what they see happening around them that might have a bearing on the organization's future success and HR's role.
5. Debrief HR challenges, problems, and crisis from a strategic perspective — pursue strategic insight and learning.

Developing a Strategic Mindset

6. Define the HR “ends” not the “means” to get there - and invite them to help build the right pathway.
7. Take time to listen and acknowledge their creative ideas.
8. Give people the freedom to make decisions (autonomy) – but also provide them context and a framework within which to operate (core values).
9. Encourage everyone to challenge current HR practices (do this only if you really mean it!).
10. Share HR success stories - where HR was the hero!

Developing a Strategic Mindset

11. Invest in building a strong HR community.
12. Walk the talk - model great strategic thinking in how you approach your own decision making, problem solving, crisis management, etc.
13. Take time, as an HR team, for a strategic thinking “retreat” where you escape from the tactical and operational levels if even for a half-day!

A photograph of a sunset over the ocean. The sun is a large, bright, glowing orb in the upper right quadrant, casting a warm, golden light across the sky and the water. The sky transitions from a pale yellow near the sun to a deeper orange and red towards the horizon. Numerous birds are silhouetted against the bright sky, flying in various directions. The ocean is dark with white-capped waves breaking. In the foreground, dark, jagged rocks are visible, partially submerged in the water.

It's not enough to be industrious; so are the
ants. What are you industrious about?

—Henry David Thoreau

Lucas Point, Monterey



Sometimes I lie awake at night, and I ask myself: "Where have I gone wrong?"

Then a voice says to me . . .

"This is going to take more than one night!"

— Charles M. Schulz
Charlie Brown in "Peanuts"

Boglands and Clouds
Connemara National Park

Good luck integrating insights from
this session into your HR strategies!



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