



HOW I SEE IT.

On the occasion of my firm's 10th anniversary, I share:

*"The First 7 Incredible Lessons of Success: experiences gained working in numerous sectors."
My definition of "success" is the ability to endure, achieve, and rebound.*

Leadership Rule #4: A Weak Plan is Better Than A Strong Guess

With all due respect to the hi-profile celebrity bosses and those who think they're "gut" is the best strategic decision making weapon in their arsenal, I beg to differ. Shooting-from-the-hip is a sure way to set an enterprise up for failure. Oh sure everyone knows in the beginning, there's a lot of 'improvisation.' However, a firm's reputation is established by performance based on consistent decision making, planning, and strategic execution. As the company grows, the need for grown-up process, policy, and leadership must develop as well.

Leadership is about making the best decision possible, with the information at hand, in light of the situation at the time. It is often in the midst of chaos, uncertainty, and confusion that a leader's mettle is tested and their abilities revealed.

Successful companies, organizations, communities, even governments continue to succeed and rebound from setbacks when leaders are defined by confidence, initiative, and strategic planning.

Strategic planning is always maligned as slow, expensive, and meaningless – it is IF you think it is. But the opposite can be just as true. Don't get caught-up thinking that if you take time to plan you're going to miss an opportunity, be seen as too analytical, or too slow to make decisions. You're better off making a good decision a bit slower than a poor decision quickly.

In short, the planning process is a formalized, determined, and focused means of getting the best minds around a single concept: what can this enterprise become? That single question incorporates structure, products, services, territory, R&D, sales, marketing, finances, staffing, and literally every dimension of the firm. It should stir everyone's imagination about what the marketplace is craving and how they can fill the void. It should be about building on a stellar history or rebuilding, in case of a downturn, and repositioning for greatness and relevance.

All of this thought-provoking energy should reveal alternatives to achieving your objectives. Before embarking on any one path, consider long term ramifications or implications for the future. As I often say, "You've got to see around corners." Over the years so much of my work has been helping owners and executives do just that. It is incumbent upon you to take advantage of your history and the input of your advisors. *Learn - apply - remember - and re-apply.*

The future of your organization is at stake. Think about its potential impact on you, employees, customers, potential customers, vendors, and the communities in which you operate. When you do, you'll see that your success is meaningful to a lot of people. It deserves more than a guess. It deserves a determined, critical, well-thought-out plan.

Do it right. Muster all the money, energy, internal and external talent within your reach to create a smart roadmap based on where you want to go, how you want to get there, and fundamental truths.

One other thing: don't follow a competitor's moves or model. Create and play by your own distinct strengths and rules. A plan rooted in differentiation is better than a 'me-too' model. Distinction is the hallmark of sustained excellence.

At least that's how I see it.

Vince Crew
• Speaker • Author
• Adviser

**Programs,
Assistance, and
Resources to
Owners & Executives
on
Strategic Growth
Through
New Leadership,
Intelligent Staffing,
and Everyday Ethics
development.**

The perspectives in this newsletter are not a substitute for tailored counsel or programs designed for your particular situation. Contact us to discuss your specific needs.

A TIP OR TWO

The 4B Options for Any Enterprise:

- 1) Get **Bigger** - increase your position - by *mass*: acquire from outside - look out (more - trends, community, industry) - by *muscle*: grow from inside - look in (stronger - align risk, talent, and strengths) - by *tone*: redefine the business - look around (go deeper)
- 2) Get **Better** - increase your value by demonstrating your values
- 3) Get **Bought** - sell out while you still have some worth or merge with a stronger entity
- 4) Get **Buried** - ignore the first 3 and watch your relevance (visibility, authority, growth) deteriorate significantly into one of those "used to be..." stories whispered about in small informal gatherings of retirees.

THOUGHTS FROM HERE AND THERE

You can either take action or you can hang back and hope for a miracle. Miracles are great, but they are so unpredictable. Peter F. Drucker

Be ambitious in your goals, relentless in your determination, passionate in your drive... but conservative in your expenses, realistic about your timelines, and understanding of those who would fill your mind with doubts and negative thoughts. Vince Crew

Before everything else, getting ready is the secret of success. Henry Ford

Let our advance worrying become advance thinking and planning. Sir Winston Churchill

The will to win is important, but the will to prepare is vital. Coach Joe Paterno

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fail, one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift hi up. And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two withstand him. A threefold cord is not quickly broken. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. James 2:17

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