



HOW I SEE IT.

The Number One Reason Your Firm Will or Won't Fail

As we enter a new year, with a new president, with a new set of challenges on top of the old ones, everyone is filled with anticipation and hope. These are not options. You must look at your business and decide: Can you survive? Then swiftly and decisively pursue the course of action. Entire industries rise and fall because of one thing:

Management of the Strategic Plan

Last year's headlines were filled with failures that all point to flawed strategy, tactics, planning, and ethics. Plans weren't crafted, let alone executed. Checks and balances weren't enforced. No one was asking the tough questions when things were going well. Then, it all went bad... first little by little, then all at once.

I'm not a big fan of the annual New Year's resolution ritual. But I am in favor of staying flexible as the business environment changes. So get ready to think about how you can turn the market turmoil to your advantage. Incredible alliances, powerful friendships, and awesome faith are all forged in the burning coals and raging flames of adversity.

No fire sales. Both buyers and competitors can smell fear and they'll drive down your prices, profits – the things you must maximize to thrive in a downturn. Be flexible, but don't give away your margins or reputation in a desperate attempt to pay the bills.

You need to readjust your mind-set for a future that looks very different than it did last year. You need to become as strong as possible, as fast as possible, with these three actions:

- **Focus.** Re-examine the three core building blocks of your enterprise: **Mission** is about what you are today, what you do and to whom/for whom you do it. **Vision** is about what you want to become in the eyes of your customers, industry, community, etc.; **Values** are the principles that guide the entire team into making the decisions and behaving a certain way to get more business. Forget grandiose verbiage – think short, powerful, memorable – think bumper sticker, not historical document. Next, re-assess and ensure alignment of your products and services with the core building blocks – push the best, pull the rest.
- **Invest.** Times are going to be challenging for some time soon so margin and cash flow pressures will continue. Manage your monies, credit lines, and vendor relationships. Focus on anything that can help drive revenues, attract or retain customers, and improve employee performance.
- **Position.** Some of your competitors will go out of business. Buying trends will change. How should you re-position your brand and your value to be on top as the dust continues to settle? Should you be collaborating, consolidating, or expanding? Your strategic road map needs to take into account competition, industry, marketplace, regulation, and other factors that could impact the journey.

The worst thing you can do right now...

Is to be alone. Isolation skews reality and drives irrational decisions that look good on paper but have horrible outcomes. It's time to band together and take this economy head on.

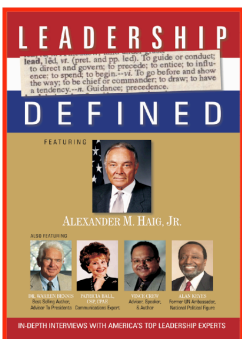
Several months ago my plans for 2009 were to reduce my travel – in order to create a line of DVDs, work on two new books, and create other resources. I've since committed to increasing my availability to whoever needs me and seeks a renewed confidence, courage, and calculated strategy. So IF you don't want to go it alone, contact me and let's see how I can help.

Oh yeah, and don't wait - do it now and you'll be fine in 2009.

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,
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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 3 Most Important Questions to ask During a Strategic Planning Session...

- 1. **What if...** *(open your mind and explore the possibilities)*
- 2. **Could we...** *(look ahead and explore the alternatives)*
- 3. **Should we...** *(focus on values and imagine the consequences)*

THOUGHTS FROM HERE AND THERE

Do or do not... there is no try. Yoda

It's tough to make predictions, especially about the future. Yogi Berra

1 good idea executed each year beats 100 a day on paper. Vince Crew

It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change. Charles Darwin

Worry about being better; bigger will take care of itself. Gary Comer, founder of Lands' End

The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to want. Proverbs 21:6

Write the vision; make it plain upon the tablets, so he may run who reads it. For still the vision awaits its time; it hastens to the end -- it will not lie. If it seem slow, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay. Habakkuk 2:2-4

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 him 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

Where there is no vision the people perish. Proverbs 29:18

Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. James 1:4

VINNIE'S COMMERCIAL

Strategic planning is for only two kinds of firms: one that has been successful but is experiencing difficulties and one that is successful and wants to keep it going.

As a professional facilitator at your next executive strategy retreat you will benefit from years of experience in: minimizing politics and posturing, keeping your team focused, and helping you create a road map to a more promising future.

There are no cookie-cutter strategic plans; companies are different and so are their plans. Gain the competitive edge to jump start your 2009 with tools to assist you and your team in designing a plan aligned with your distinct company culture, history, focus, and marketplace.

Then... and this is what separates us from a lot of the others – Vince remains available to act as an accountability agent to ensure the plan is implemented, measured, and managed. Call or email today for date availabilities.

ALWAYS, ALWAYS... Continue to REACH!

REACH Development Services

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