



# DESIGNING STRATEGIES®

Business Strategies for the Design Industry

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A study conducted last fall by Bain & Company shed some interesting light on companies using strategic planning. Chief executive officers were polled and revealed that 85% felt that they are good at strategic planning. But, only 40% felt that they can execute the strategies well. Sadly, only 10% felt that their organizations were aligned with their strategies.

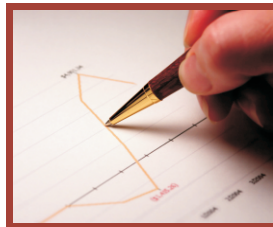
Where do you and your company fall in these statistical categories? If you are in that last group, what can you do to get your company back on track? If you are in the middle group, what can you do to elevate your level of competency in implementing the plan?

In the end, it is people who make it all happen. It is important to evaluate the day-to-day processes and culture of your organization to determine how well they match the needs of your strategies. As leaders of your organization, you will be the ones to set the tone, define the future and encourage your human resources to follow your lead. This may mean bringing in new people or moving some existing people around to better utilize their skills. Implement training, mentoring or coaching programs to bring untapped potential to the surface.

**W**e're already past the middle of the year. Depending on when your fiscal year begins, you should be thinking about strategically planning for the next few years of a path toward success. Of course, you've been routinely tracking your progress, successes and failures alike. Will all goals and objective be met by year's end?

Now, where did you put that plan after last year's retreat? Oh, there it is, sitting on the shelf collecting dust beside the business plan and policy manual. If this is your situation, you are not using strategic planning to move your company to new heights. Your strategic planning has become an annual event, not an on-going, living, fluid management tool.

## Visualize

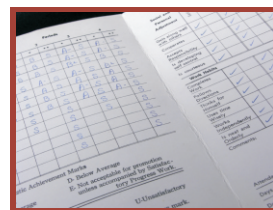


**If a strategic plan is to create success and move you toward your goals**, you have to take it out and use it. Merely having a planning retreat "because it's the thing to do" means nothing if the plan you develop is not a well-thought out roadmap to get you where you want to go. Further, if you don't bother to follow your map, you won't get there at all. It's a tough world out there. Competition is at its most fierce level. Companies that seem to have been around forever are disappearing or being gobbled up

by larger predators. The firm with the plan, the vision and innovation, and uses them, will successfully get to the finish line. Will you?

So, how are you using your plan, assuming, of course, you have a plan? Do you review it regularly with your managers to assure everyone is on course and working within the time frames set for completion? If not, consider changing or adjusting your course to find a way to get back on track. Timing is everything. To be effective, all involved parties need to be at the same stage of a task or project at the appropriate time. Qualitative and quantitative measurements are critical. Assign a means of measuring and tracking results. Review the results when updating the plan. Statistical data you collect from year to year, or even quarter to quarter, plays a key part in developing updated plans for growth and success. Following trends and analyzing statistics of the past can provide insightful focus into the future.

## Analyze



**Develop a 'report card', or 'score card' review process** that allows you to analyze degrees of completion and levels of success at regular intervals. This should take place at the very least, quarterly, but even better would be bi-monthly or monthly. This does not need to become a major process that takes managers away from their assigned tasks. Some of the latest business models and management tools require enormous amounts of time, and reams of paperwork from managers. Keep it simple. At the end of the year, 'grade' the entire plan. Consider which goals and objectives should be preserved and built upon, which need improved, and which should be chalked up to bad ideas and just completely eliminated.

Each time your team meets to develop a strategic plan, think of it as a chance to review and renew the vision and mission for your company's success and growth. Watch for new opportunities in the ever-changing economy, politics, social and cultural make up of your customer base, and the newest in technology. What bright, new vision manifests itself and what new goals will get you to that vision?

## Strategize

## Visualize - Analyze - Strategize Plan for success!

### Maurer On The Move

Below are scheduled speaking engagements where you can see and hear Terri's informative presentations on a variety of business topics. If you have questions about an event or topic, contact Terri at: [tmaurer@juno.com](mailto:tmaurer@juno.com).

#### October 18th

Fall Market  
D & D Building  
New York City

#### November 1st

ASID Design Source NE  
Boston World Trade Center  
Boston

### Something To Think About...

"Management is nothing more than motivating other people."

Lee Iacocca

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