

First Organizational Strategies; Then Marketing Strategies

In his book, 'The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People', author Steven Covey wrote "Habit #3: Put First Things First"!

Every good marketing company will tell you that you need to define your marketing strategies before you develop your marketing plan. Marketing strategies are indeed important, however, they are just one part of the complex nature of a successful business. A well thought

through marketing strategy can be ineffective if the organization's strategy supporting it is non-existent or contrary.

A strategy is defined as a plan of action to achieve a goal or set of goals. Two of the first strategic thinkers, nearly 2,500 years ago, were Alexander the Great and Sun Tsu, author of "The Art of War." The foundation of military concepts they laid are the bedrock of business strategy even today.

A highly effective marketing strategy must be part of an overall organizational strategy that is built on these foundations:

- Vision, Mission, and Values of the organization
- Internal and external factors that inhibit or facilitate achievement
- Unique core competencies and productive uses of them
- Linkages for all functional aspects of the organization (e.g. marketing)
- Clearly defined actions, responsibilities, and timelines to achieve developed goals
- Ways to measure progress and change the strategy if necessary

So, what's the big deal with all this? The big deal is it is difficult to put together a strategic marketing plan without first having a well-defined organizational strategic plan. Businesses today, even "small" ones, operate in a very complex environment with demanding government, demanding workers, demanding customers, and demanding suppliers.

How do you do it?

Many of the most progressive companies seek out professionals who use organizational assessment software that will, figuratively, "x-ray" the organization based on the best practices of

those that are most successfully managed in the country. Strategy, design, and culture all need to be addressed. The results of such an assessment tool create limitless opportunities for dialogue between management team members, or the owner and employees, etc.

The process that is used to analyze the results of the assessment meet all the bulleted criteria above and will produce an organization that knows its future and has a solid plan to achieve it with accountabilities defined.

Wouldn't you want your strategic marketing plan to be based on a solid organizational plan first?

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