

THINKING STRATEGICALLY

Worksheets for seeing big pictures

Use this tool to gain sense of the business ecosystem in which you operate. Seeing the big pictures can help you set the stage for thinking strategically about your work.

Part I: Your company and unit

1. What is your company's competitive strategy? If you don't know, what steps might you take to find out? Consider asking your boss and peer managers, as well as examining company documents and executive communications.

2. What are your unit's strategic objectives? How do those objectives relate to the corporate strategy? For example, if you work in a product development unit, has your unit defined a strategy stipulating development of new product lines to support a high-level strategy focused.

3. What actions, plans and decisions might enable your group to help support your unit's and company's strategies? Consider potential process improvements, better management of costs, new revenue opportunities, and other potentially valuable costs of action.

Part II: Your customers, competitors and industry.

4. Who are your company's customers? Consider various customer segments as well as any internal customer your group may serve if you work in a support function.

5. What needs and preferences does your organization currently fulfill for its customers? What unique forms of value does your company offer its customers?

6. How might your customers' needs and preferences evolve in the future? Do you anticipate demand for faster service, higher-quality products, more affordable offerings?

7. What could your group do to help your company fulfill customers changing requirements? Consider process improvements, product ideas, and other means of enhancing the value your organization provides customers.

8. With what organizations does your company compete? Ask your boss, peer managers and business acquaintances for input.

9. What industry trends might have important implications for your company's business? Consult business publications and talk with other informed professionals to assess these trends.

10. How might your group take advantage of opportunities offered by emerging industry trends or stave off threats posed by such trends? Cite as many examples as you can.

11. Think of a decision you're weighing or a course of action you're considering. Write it below.

12. Who are all the stakeholders in this decision? List everyone who would be affected by or have an interest in the outcome of the decision. Be sure to consider your boss, and peer managers and employees.

13. How will you learn about potential impact of your decision on your various stakeholders in different parts of your organization? List the questions you will want to ask your stakeholders.

14. If you've consulted stakeholders about their concerns regarding your decision or proposed course of action, have you identified any underlying issues that cross multiple groups of stakeholders? If so, what are they? Common shared concerns may include cost, time, workload, and so forth.

15. How might you shape your decision or proposed course of action so as to address stakeholder concerns you've identified? For example, would a pilot project help ease worries about the expense of a new initiative?



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