



Strategic Thinking

The Quality of Thoughtfulness

The ability to think and plan strategically is perhaps the most important single skill of effective business owners and executives. In a longitudinal study of leaders who, in retrospect, made the best and most effective decisions, **the single quality that stood out from all others was the quality of "thoughtfulness."**

Thoughtfulness may be defined as a careful concern for the secondary consequences of each decision and each action. This is the essence of strategic thinking.

Your Most Powerful Tool

The most powerful tool that you as an "Owner" have to bring to bear on your work is **your mind - your thinking ability**. Everything you do that sharpens and hones **your ability to think with greater clarity before acting, will benefit you and help you to move upward and onward more rapidly.**

Use a Two Pronged Approach

The best way to approach strategic thinking is two pronged. This means to work simultaneously on the personal and the business.

Increase Your "Return On Energy"

In personal terms, **strategic planning is an exercise in increasing "return on energy."** Your greatest single asset is your earning ability. **And your earning ability is nothing more than the total of the mental, emotional and physical energies that you can apply toward getting valuable results for yourself and your company.**

Anything that you can do to increase your "return on energy" invested will increase your overall levels of effectiveness and contribution in every area of your life, especially, and most importantly in your work.

Action Exercise

Here are two things you can do immediately to increase your "return on equity" and your "return on energy".

First, think about everything that you are doing in terms of its financial return to your organization. **What are the things that you do that yield the highest "return on equity"?** **Whatever they are, do more of them.**

Second, think in personal terms about the things you do that give you the highest "return on energy". **Where do you contribute the greatest value and achieve the greatest satisfaction?** **Whatever they are, do more of these things.**