

DECISIONS AND SKILLS OF THE STRATEGIC LEADERS

Elizabeta Stamevska¹
Vasko Stamevski²

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Abstract

Strategic leaders are known for thinking ahead, preparing for succession, and implementing a strategy. If companies are struggling in these areas, then it would make sense to take a look at bringing in a strategic leader.

Strategic leaders do not make decisions or move forward without running decisions through a strategic lens. They are disciplined in always keeping the objective first. They will not make a quick decision, but they will decide if it fits with the short and long-term goals of the company.

Strategic leadership links the personal attributes of the leader with their professional knowledge and experience. Because strategy is no longer a top-down activity but is the responsibility of many people within an organization, demanding a culture of strategic innovation and openness, leaders must be able to connect their leadership imperative with the culture and practice of the wider organization, thereby delivering sustained impact and influence through individuals, teams and business units.

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1. Introduction

Strategic leadership refers to a manager's potential to express a strategic vision for the organization, or a part of the organization, and to motivate and persuade others to acquire that vision. Strategic leadership can also be defined as utilizing strategy in the management of employees. It is the potential to influence organizational members and to execute organizational change. Strategic leaders create organizational structure, allocate resources and express strategic vision. Strategic leaders work in an ambiguous

¹ Associate Professor, PhD, European University, Skopje, Faculty of Economics, Associate Professor, PhD, elizabeta.stamevska@eurm.edu.mk

² Associate Professor, PhD International Slavic University „Gavrilo Romanovikj Derzhavin“ Sveti Nikole - Bitola, vasko.stamevski@gmail.com

environment on very difficult issues that influence and are influenced by occasions and organizations external to their own.

The main objective of strategic leadership is strategic productivity. Another aim of strategic leadership is to develop an environment in which employees forecast the organization's needs in context of their own job. Strategic leaders encourage the employees in an organization to follow their own ideas. Strategic leaders make greater use of reward and incentive system for encouraging productive and quality employees to show much better performance for their organization. Functional strategic leadership is about inventiveness, perception, and planning to assist an individual in realizing his objectives and goals.

Leaders who develop the strategies that drive a business are also required to have a bird's eye view of the company, as well as an intimate understanding of how everything in the business is interconnected. They need to understand such things as the expectations of the stakeholders, the needs of the customers, the competitive landscape, the global trends, the environment within which the business operates and so on.

Strategic leadership is the ability to influence others to voluntarily make decisions that enhance the prospects for the organization's long-term success while maintaining short-term financial stability. Different leadership approaches impact the vision and direction of growth and the potential success of an organization. To successfully deal with change, all executives need the skills and tools for both strategy formulation and implementation (May, R. (n.d.)). [Managing change](#) and ambiguity requires strategic leaders who not only provide a sense of direction, but who can also build ownership and alignment within their workgroups to implement change (Fulmer, R., Stumpf, S., Bleak, J., 2009, pp.17-22).

2. Strategic leadership

Leadership has a significant role play in the formation and carrying out of strategies. It is termed as a linkage which connects the strategic management process with the aim and vision of the organization (Jabbar, A. A., Hussein, M., A., 2017, p.104).

„We can't solve problems using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them”. The quote by Albert Einstein perfectly captures the need of strategy and the essence of strategic leadership. In order to solve problems and move forward, people need to interpret the world around them with a fresh insight and vision. While it's easy to think that most leaders would go ahead with a strategy, all too often the idea of the strategic leadership framework is misunderstood as simply having a plan of action. The leadership style is much more than just an idea of how to implement certain policies or processes.

Whole organizations performance depends upon leadership (Loren & Matthew, 2008). Strategic leadership requires the potential to foresee and comprehend the work

environment. It requires objectivity and potential to look at the broader picture. A few main **traits/ characteristics/features/qualities** of effective strategic leaders that do lead to superior performance are as follows:

a) Loyalty - Powerful and effective leaders demonstrate their loyalty to their vision by their words and actions.

b) Keeping them updated - Efficient and effective leaders keep themselves updated about what is happening within their organization. They have various formal and informal sources of information in the organization.

c) Judicious use of power - Strategic leaders makes a very wise use of their power. They must play the power game skillfully and try to develop consent for their ideas rather than forcing their ideas upon others. They must push their ideas gradually.

d) Wider perspective/outlook - Strategic leaders just don't have skills in their narrow specialty but they have a little knowledge about a lot of things.

e) Motivation - Strategic leaders must have a zeal for work that goes beyond money and power and also they should have an inclination to achieve goals with energy and determination.

f) Compassion - Strategic leaders must understand the views and feelings of their subordinates, and make decisions after considering them.

g) Self-control - Strategic leaders must have the potential to control distracting/disturbing moods and desires, i.e., they must think before acting.

h) Social skills - Strategic leaders must be friendly and social.

i) Self-awareness - Strategic leaders must have the potential to understand their own moods and emotions, as well as their impact on others.

j) Readiness to delegate and authorize - Effective leaders are proficient at delegation. They are well aware of the fact that delegation will avoid overloading of responsibilities on the leaders. They also recognize the fact that authorizing the subordinates to make decisions will motivate them a lot.

k) Articulacy - Strong leaders are articulate enough to communicate the vision (vision of where the organization should head) to the organizational members in terms that boost those members.

l) Constancy/ Reliability - Strategic leaders constantly convey their vision until it becomes a component of organizational culture.

To conclude, strategic leaders can create vision, express vision, passionately possess vision and persistently drive it to accomplishment.

3. Decisions of the strategic leaders

One of the major role of strategic management is to incorporate various functional areas of the organization completely, as well as, to ensure these functional areas harmonize and get together well (Stamevska, E., Dimitrieska, S., Stankovska, A., 2019,

p.60). Strategic leaders carry strategic decisions that relate to whole environment in which the firm operates, the entire resources, the people who work in the company and the interface between them.

Characteristics of strategic decisions:

a) Strategic decisions have major resource propositions for an organization. These decisions may be concerned with possessing new resources, organizing others or reallocating others.

b) Strategic decisions deal with harmonizing organizational resource capabilities with the threats and opportunities.

c) Strategic decisions deal with the range of organizational activities. It is all about what they want the organization to be like and to be about.

d) Strategic decisions involve a change of major kind since an organization operates in ever-changing environment.

e) Strategic decisions are complex in nature.

f) Strategic decisions are at the top most level, are uncertain as they deal with the future, and involve a lot of risk.

g) Strategic decisions are different from administrative and operational decisions.

Administrative decisions are routine decisions which help or rather facilitate strategic decisions or operational decisions. Operational decisions are technical decisions which help execution of strategic decisions. To reduce cost is a strategic decision which is achieved through operational decision of reducing the number of employees and how we carry out these reductions will be administrative decision.

The differences between Strategic, Administrative and Operational decisions can be summarized as follows table.

Table 1: The differences between Strategic, Administrative and Operational decisions

Strategic Decisions	Administrative Decisions	Operational Decisions
Strategic decisions are long-term decisions.	Administrative decisions are taken daily.	Operational decisions are not frequently taken.
These are considered where The future planning is concerned.	These are short-term based Decisions.	These are medium-period based decisions.
Strategic decisions are taken in Accordance with organizational mission and vision.	These are taken according to strategic and operational Decisions.	These are taken in accordance with strategic and administrative decision.
These are related to overall Counter planning of all Organization.	These are related to working of employees in an Organization.	These are related to production.
These deal with organizational Growth.	These are in welfare of employees working in an organization.	These are related to production and factory growth.

4. Skills of the strategic leaders

Leadership is responsible to direct the subordinates to perform the organizational tasks effectively (Holloway, M., 2011). For strategic leaders to be successful, it needs to start with an understanding of the internal factors as well as the external factors that determine the success of the company, whether short term or long term. That understanding needs to be both honest and clear.

The relevance of strategic leaders is all about strategy, and so it will require strategy. They must have the ability to be abstract in the theoretical world of business analysis and also to be practical in business strategy. Strategic leaders should be able to look at the business analysis, so that can identify the opportunities that the analysis reveals. They should then be able to choose the opportunities that they will follow, so that they can then develop a unique strategy, which defines how the business will leverage the opportunities, so that he will become successful.

The leader should be a strong enough to be able to implement the business strategy in the company. These leaders need to engage with the stakeholders of the company, both internally and externally, and be aware of the challenges that face strategic implementation. Additionally, they should be skilled enough leaders to overcome those challenges.

In theory, at least, it is possible to master all of the **skills** that strategic leaders requires, simply by gaining experience on the job. However, this is impractical and slow, at best. It is important to develop a training program for strategic leadership. This training should also be conducted under the guidance of a strategic leader expert.

- ✓ **Understanding** - The good strategic leaders course, give an intimate understanding of the way the business environment today is both interconnected and global.
- ✓ **Development** - The good strategic leaders course is opportunity to develop the strategic thinking skills, especially in relation to the way the business operates within its immediate and greater environment.
- ✓ **Identification** - Good training in strategic leaders give the ability to quickly and easily identify opportunities for the company in its immediate as well as greater business environment.
- ✓ **Creation** - The good strategic leaders course teach how to create strategies that are both effective and efficient in the leveraging of the opportunities which you identify for the business.
- ✓ **Management** - As would be expected, good training in strategic leaders is the ability to manage both the team and the organization as a whole, as it moves forward to achieve the goals of the strategic plan.

The best kind of training in strategic leadership give the ability to work directly on the issues that affect the business. Good training also provide with the necessary leadership skills that will help to execute the business strategies.

5. Conclusion

Most organizations and leaders are poor at detecting ambiguous threats and opportunities on the periphery of their business. Strategic leaders, in contrast, are constantly vigilant, honing their ability to anticipate by scanning the environment for signals of change.

In uncertain times, decision makers may have to make tough calls with incomplete information, and often they must do so quickly. But strategic leaders insist on multiple options at the outset and don't get prematurely locked into simplistic go/no-go choices. They follow a disciplined process that balances rigor with speed, considers the trade-offs involved, and takes both short- and long-term goals into account. In the end, strategic leaders must have the courage of their convictions informed by a robust decision process.

Strategic thinkers challenge their own and others' assumptions and encourage divergent points of view. Only after careful reflection and examination of a problem through many lenses do they take decisive action. This requires patience, courage, and an open mind. Strategic leaders are the focal point for organizational learning. They promote a culture of inquiry, and they search for the lessons in both successful and unsuccessful outcomes. They study failure their own and their teams' in an open, constructive way to find the hidden lessons.

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