

# Bringing Strategic Thinking to your Organization

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“The significant problems we face today cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.”

*Albert Einstein*

# What We'll Cover

- Critical differences between strategic thinking and strategic planning
- Ways to establish strategic thinking as a continuous process
- Techniques for facilitating strategic thinking

“Time and again we discover that the signals were there all along – we just didn’t recognize them until it was too late.”

Wayne Burkan





# Strategic Thinking vs. Strategic Planning

Distinct but interrelated and complementary thought processes that sustain and support one another for effective strategic management

## Strategic Thinking

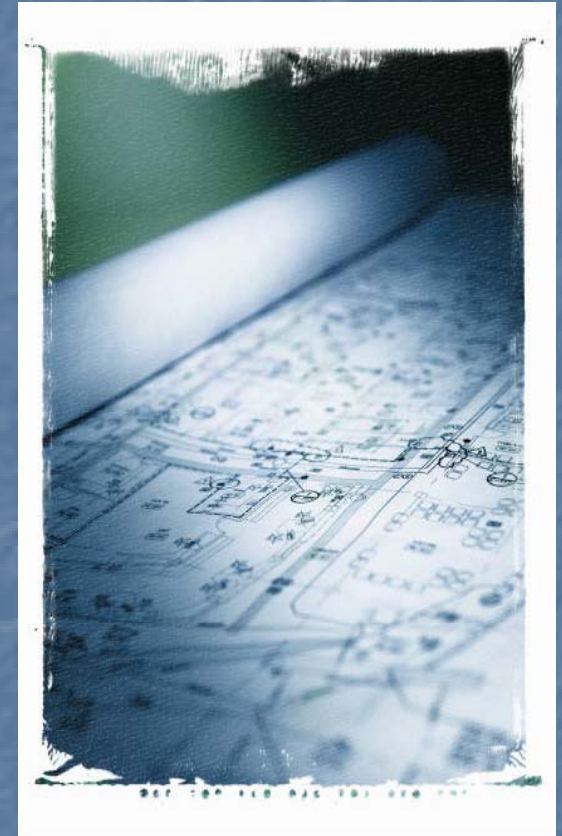
- Imagining new and different futures leading to redefined core strategies

## Strategic Planning

- Realizing, supporting and integrating core strategies back into the business

# What is Strategic Thinking?

- The way we think about, assess, imagine, and create our future
- Critical reasoning that goes beyond a cursory discussion of the situation
- Proactive engagement that leads to a clear blueprint for realizing our vision



*Strategic thinking always involves change, and can involve profound personal change*

# Strategic Thinking Competencies



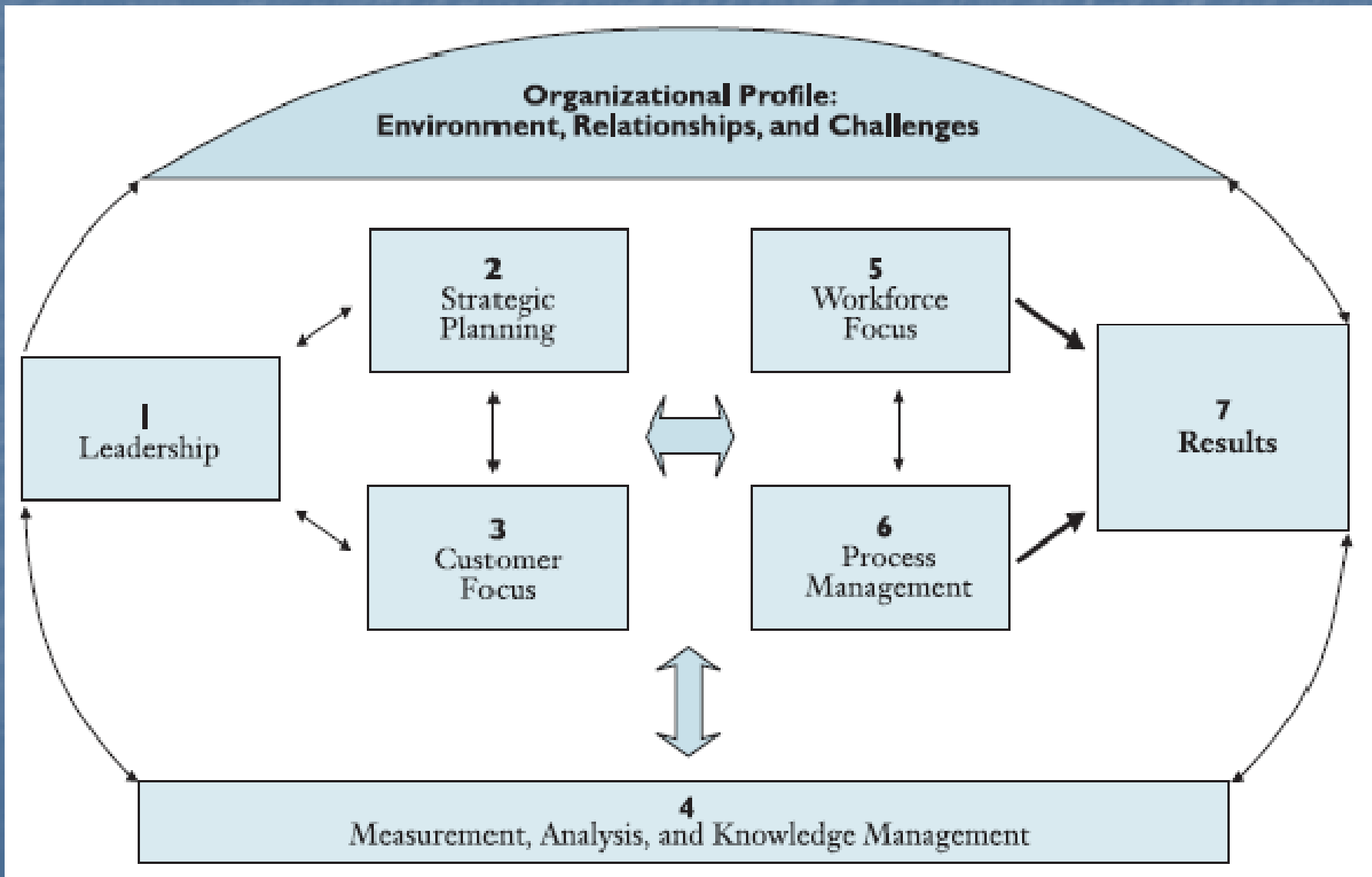
- Thinking across time
- Hypothesis driven
- Constancy of purpose
- External awareness
- Intelligent opportunism
- Systems thinking

Which competency is a strength for you?

# Systems Thinking

- Seeing the systems within systems
- Understanding the system as a whole rather than analytically fragmenting the view into disconnected parts
- Asking the right questions to drive toward a big picture view of context, relationship and connections

# Baldrige Criteria Framework



# Baldrige Criteria: a Tool to Drive Strategic Thinking

- How does your organization conduct its strategic planning?
- How do you ensure that you address SWOTs; major shifts in technology, markets, products, customer preferences, competition, regulatory environment; long-term organizational sustainability?
- What are your key strategic objectives?
- How do you deploy your strategy?
- What are your results for key measures of accomplishment of your organizational strategy?

Sample questions from Strategic Planning & Leadership Outcomes Categories

# Surfacing Critical Issues: A Process

- Poll top managers for issues: opportunities and threats such as dramatic shifts in demand, competition, industry, regulation, etc... rationale must be included
- Small executive team reviews, designates as critical, monitor, or not relevant
- Use strategic thinking tools to analyze
- Create or refine core strategies
- Build plans as appropriate to respond
- REPEAT! ...migrate away from calendar-based approaches to budgeting and planning

# Scenario Planning

Involves articulating plausible possibilities for the future that guide better decision making

“Scenarios are stories. They are works of art, rather than scientific analyses.

The reliability of (their content) is less important than the types of conversations and decisions they spark.”

Arle De Geus, The Living Company



# A Technique for Scenario Planning

- Define a question that would benefit from scenario planning
- Select two uncertainties, describing both ends of each spectrum
- Develop a matrix placing each of the two uncertainties on each axis
- Play out two or more scenarios; discuss the implications of each to your future

# Example: The Edinburgh Scenarios

## What is the future of eLearning?

- Identified two critical uncertainties
  - Sources of **POWER**, influence and new ideas: Emergent or Established?
  - Role of **TECHNOLOGY** in society: Empower or Frustrate?

# Discussion

- What's happening today that is evidence that this scenario will unfold?
- If this scenario is happening:
  - What might be some of the headlines we read in 2014?
  - What will players in the e-learning industry need to do differently?

# Additional Ways to Exercise Your Strategic Thinking Muscles

**Mission  
Statement**

**External  
Scan**

**Stage  
Gating**



**Vision  
Statement**

**SWOT  
Analysis**

**Decision  
Tree**

# Food for Thought.....

**“If you want something  
you’ve never had before,  
you’ve got to do something  
you’ve never done before”**

Drina Reed

Questions? Comments?



# References/Resources

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