

The Strategic Leader's Roadmap: 6 Steps for Integrating Leadership and Strategy

Harbir Singh, Michael Useem

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THE STRATEGIC LEADER'S ROADMAP

*6 Steps for Integrating
Leadership and Strategy*



HARBIR SINGH & MICHAEL USEEM



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Harbir Singh, Michael Useem : The Strategic Leader's Roadmap: 6 Steps for Integrating Leadership and Strategy before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Strategic Leader's Roadmap: 6 Steps for Integrating Leadership and Strategy:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. "good strategy and bad strategy." (He is the author of a ...By Ian Mann Ask any strategist, no matter their approach to strategy or method, what is the biggest problem they

face. Ask any business owner a few months after they have completed their strategy, what is the biggest problem they face. You will get exactly the same answer from both. The strategy is not being executed. According to Professor Richard Rumelt of UCLA, there are only two types of strategy, "good strategy and bad strategy." (He is the author of a book by the same name, reviewed in this column in 2012.) The strategy method described at the beginning of this book would fall into Rumelt's definition of bad strategy, and I would not read this book for Part I. That said, this is a valuable guide for how to ensure your strategy is executed. The execution comes from your leader's ability to integrate the strategy into their leadership method. Many good leaders I have met have never considered this issue, and many senior managers have never thought about what it would take to do so. Authors Singh and Useem of Wharton Business School have formulated this process into six steps. The first step is the realization of the connection between leadership and strategy. As a guest at a barbeque one weekend, I was asked what I did for a living. I replied that I am a strategist, to which one of the guests responded that his firm had recently gone through just such a process. I asked him how it was going and he replied: "We are so busy with our regular work, we simply haven't had the time to even think about the strategy." One has to wonder what the regular work could possibly be except trying to execute the strategy! That is the beginning of Singh and Useem's prescription for strategic leadership: integrating strategy and leadership. Strategic leadership is being clear what the strategy is so you can make choices of where to play and how to win, how to prioritize goals, and to ensure you have the human capabilities necessary to achieve these goals. "Integrating the two areas calls for a continuous and simultaneous discussion of both strategy and leadership questions," the authors exhort. The key word here is "continuous": the discussion of leadership and strategy at every opportunity. The continuous discussions are around the positions of the organization to meet the strategy, and whether you still have the right people and architecture in place. The second step on the strategy leader's roadmap is the acknowledgement that neither strategy nor leadership is a natural skill set; it must be taught. Academic research, born out by management practice has identified several ways this type of development can be achieved. Possibly the most effective is a combination of formal learning, one-on-one coaching and exposure to instructive experience. These experiences are chosen for the opportunity they offer to force the candidate to apply the learning and coaching if he or she is to succeed. Formal learning, one-on-one coaching and exposure to instructive experience is a powerful combination. This approach has been behind the success of General Electric, Boeing, American Express, IBM, and Procter Gamble. And it doesn't require deep pockets, only determination from senior leadership and the board. The third step to ensuring the strategy is executed is by identifying the strategic fit between the current managers and the particular challenges the incumbent will face. The executive must have the temperament and relevant experience that aligns with the specific imperatives of the firm at the moment. If they don't, then the second step, development, as described above becomes necessary and if that fails, another leader must be sought. This process entails pinpointing the priority skills the leader requires through careful and detailed analysis, not coffee table discussion. The fourth step is to convey the strategic intent, (or what I call your "functional strategy") and how you have to function to achieve the strategic outcomes in a dynamic and fast-changing business environment. "Managers at all levels must also be able to convey strategic intent if they are to effectively exercise strategic leadership," the authors explain. The fifth step is to see leadership in layers. Once the most senior leaders have absorbed the strategy, it is up to them to cascade it down to the next level with such clarity that this level can do the same to the level below, and onward. The last step is to "decide deliberatively"; that is to use the strategy to guide each and every decision, under all circumstances, and every time. No exceptions. These six steps will ensure that your strategy is executed. They will ensure your expenditure of time, effort and money in your strategy, yields a strong return. That does however presuppose your strategy is a good one.

Readability Light --- Serious Insights High --- Low Practical High +--- Low*

Ian Mann of Gateways consults internationally on leadership and strategy and is the author of the recently released *4 of 4* people found the following review helpful. How to master the elements of strategy and leadership both separately and as an integrated whole

By Robert Morris This is one of those books whose greatest value, in my opinion, will be to those who are now preparing for a career in business or have only recently embarked on one and need a primer, and, to those in middle management who need a reminder of basics that are too easily forgotten or compromised. There are no head snapping revelations in this book, nor do Harbir Singh and Michael Useem make any such claim. Rather, they focus on what they believe are the six essential steps to integrating leadership and strategy. Today's business world is more volatile, more uncertain, more complex, and more ambiguous than at any prior time that I remember. Various trends, shifts, and (yes) disruptions pose unique challenges. A manager's ability to integrate strategy with leadership is also of greater value than at any prior time that I remember. According to Singh and Useem, "We define leading strategically as mastering the elements of strategy and leadership both separately and as an integrated whole. It entails applying them together, and continuously drawing on both as markets morph, disruptions occur, and openings arise. In framing strategy and leadership as a single unified discipline, we are seeking to see both components applied consistently and completely. Just one or the other will not suffice." Singh and Useem cover as much ground in a volume of only 107 pages as authors of many other business books do in 300 or more pages. Their coverage is by no means definitive but certainly sufficient to serve most managers' purposes.

They make brilliant use of one reader-friendly device they call a "Box"; Each is an annotated checklist of key points. There are 14, listed now to suggest their scope of coverage: 1. The Strategic Leader's Checklist 2. Setting Company Strategy 3. Features of Competitive Positioning 4. Leading the Company 5. Integrating Strategy and Leadership: Two Key Questions 6. Integrating Strategy and Leadership 7. Learn to Lead Strategically 8. Ensuring Strategic Fit 9. Conveying Strategic Intent 10. Layering Leadership 11. Deciding Deliberatively 12. The Strategic Leader's Checklist: Carlos Ghosn 13. Execution: From Strategic Diagnosis to Implementable Initiatives 14. The Strategic Leader's Checklist: John Chambers They also make brilliant use of several "Tables"; and "Figures"; that also highlight key points. These devices will facilitate, indeed expedite frequent review of material later. However different they may be in many (if not most) respects, all of the companies annually ranked among those that are most highly admired and best to work for as well as most profitable have strategic leadership at all levels and in all areas of the given enterprise. They have developed people who have indeed mastered the elements of strategy and leadership both separately and as an integrated whole. Harbir Singh and Michael Useem have created a roadmap to guide and inform that process. They also function as guides for those who embark on that journey. I agree with them that "becoming a strategic leader oneself and developing strategic leadership in others is one of the greatest calling of our era"; And though we sometimes say that an individual is a gifted strategist or a natural-born leader, we know from research and experience that both are learned — and that we can all become strategic leaders if we stay on the right path. Self-directed learning, personal coaching, and stretch experience provide the proven avenue for getting there.

We can all become strategic leaders if we stay on the right path." Harbir Singh Michael Useem Even a strong leader can flounder without an effective strategy, and the most powerful strategy can fail without the right leader. Only those who master and integrate both skills can effectively navigate the challenges that lay ahead for today's organizations. The Strategic Leader's Roadmap, by Wharton management professors Harbir Singh and Michael Useem, offers a 6-point checklist for leading strategically that will help managers strengthen their capacity to develop strategy and to lead its execution. Drawing on one-on-one interviews with CEOs, in-depth research, and their experience teaching today's executives and tomorrow's leaders, Singh and Useem take readers into the offices and mindset of some of today's foremost strategic leaders, including: Carlos Ghosn, chief executive officer of Nissan Indra Nooyi, chief executive of PepsiCo Jack Ma, founder and chief executive of Alibaba Group John Chambers, executive chairman of Cisco Systems Fast-reading and inspiring, The Strategic Leader's Roadmap will enable leaders at all levels to master today's most vital capability.