

IS STRATEGIC PLANNING A WASTE OF TIME AND MONEY??

The answer to the question depends on who is being asked. The results of a major study of 1000 companies, government agencies and not-for-profits in over 50 countries, that was reported in Harvard Business, were rather shocking.....well at least to some. Employees of 60% of those companies rated their organizations as weak when it came to executing strategy. When they were asked if they agreed with the following statement "Important strategic and operational decisions are quickly translated in to action", the majority said no. 25% of those surveyed came from the executive ranks, traditionally the architects of the plans!

The conclusion that must be drawn, at least for those companies surveyed, is that strategic and operational planning yields a low ROI. The scope and breadth of the study would suggest that your company, no matter how big or small or the country/culture or the sector is not maximizing the payback for the resources being expended on your planning processes...strategic or operational.

The results are not likely surprising to most leaders. Experience at even implementing small changes is often fraught with frustration and disappointing results. How come?

Well the 2008 study goes on to identify what matters most when it comes to strategy execution. The results may surprise you. The first thing that managers often think to do when strategy fails is to re-organize. The research finds that what is often neglected are in fact the most powerful drivers of strategic execution.

Of the 17 traits that contribute to effective implementation, one was ranked, BY FAR as the most important. Being clear on the decisions and actions for which one is responsible. More recent evidence corroborates the earlier report.... some more shocking than the earlier study. A major study by Stephen Covey quotes that only 20 % of employees understand the strategic priorities and fewer (15%) really care. Very few can see a connection between their work and the strategic direction of the organization.

So what should you do? Well the HBR article, June 2008, The Secrets to Successful Strategy Execution, actually gives you 16 things that you may already be doing. But are you in good shape on the #1 trait? Do your people have crystal clarity on the actions and decisions that really matter? Are their objectives and plans laser aligned with the strategic priorities? Are they unstoppable when it comes to their commitment levels?

Do you want to find out? Contact us and we'll GIVE you three different ways that you can use to increase your visibility on the degree of clarity, alignment and commitment that currently exists on what matters most in your organization. No charge. No obligation. No pressure. Call or e-mail and we will respond within 24 hours. info@focusmanagement.ca or 905 945-0782