



AUGUST 2007 - LEADERSHIP LETTER #20

20 GOOD WAYS TO RUN YOUR PLANNING EFFORTS OFF THE RAILS!

Friends, clients and colleagues: Hello again –

We hope your business and personal lives are prospering, and your problems are small ones.

Recently, we've had a lot of client calls for assistance with strategic planning and/or annual action planning.

Some years ago, I wrote several articles on successful planning and implementation, and these recent queries have prompted me to create a simpler list ... one on the order of David Letterman's "Top Ten Reasons ..."

I hope you find it interesting, amusing, and/or helpful!

Please feel free to visit the site any time and view all past **Leadership Letters** too ... www.henseyassociates.com!

With best wishes for success,

Mel

Mel Hensey, PE, F.ASCE
Management Consulting Engineer
Hensey Associates
8220 Riversedge Cir., Maineville, OH 45039
513/919-7672, MHensey@aol.com
www.henseyassociates.com

20 GOOD WAYS TO RUN YOUR PLANNING EFFORTS OFF THE RAILS!

- [1] Hope it will substitute for effective **leadership**.* (It won't, absolutely.)
- [2] Plan with the wrong group of folks. (Needs to be your **key leaders**.)
- [3] Include too many people. (The actual **planning** group should be 9 or less. Others can help in other ways.)
- [4] Confuse long-range strategic planning and annual action planning. (They are different and **both** are important.)
 - [4.1] Fail to **link** annual action plans to the strategic plan goals.
- [5] Squeeze too much on the time needed for the tasks at hand. (Two days, **minimum**, three is better.)
- [6] Let the senior leader(s) do all the deciding. (That's actually an OK way to plan, but **don't** convene a group and waste their time.)
- [7] Work without an effective **facilitator**. (Doesn't have to be a consultant.)
- [8] Start without some simple "**Groundrules**" for your discussions, or fail to use them.
- [9] Allow hubris and/or fear to block **candid** airing and discussion of critical problems, issues, and needs.
- [10] Chew up precious airtime and waste human energy with long-winded talking, repetition, and off-topic stuff.
- [11] Succumb to frustrating debates on polarizing issues, vs. bringing **new approaches** to the table.
- [12] Never examine, understand, enhance and protect your competitive edge or **strategic advantage**. (It's your greatest asset!)
- [13] Fail to truly understand the essential **financial** dynamics of your business. (For example: Excessive pressure to reduce OH costs.)

- [14] Focus too much on problems instead of recognizing and pursuing **opportunities**. (So says Peter Drucker.)
- [15] Overlook or reject successful approaches used by respected competitors, clients, or other kinds of business. (Seek best practices **everywhere**.)
- [16] Believe we need to keep doing everything we are doing, vs. **reallocating** resources, people and focus in the planning work. (Definition of “stuck.”)
- [17] Permit slow or sloppy documentation in getting the planning **results** to the people who need them. (Very frustrating and demotivating.)
- [18] Have **no process** for periodically reviewing progress, tweaking the plan, keeping it “alive” and on the radar screen.
- [19] Forget to recognize and applaud accomplishments and progress. **Worse yet**, comment mostly on the gaps or failures.
- [20] Distract leaders from the plan with **new** programs, major efforts, higher priorities, fad de jour. (See “Doom Loop” in **Good to Great**.) Link it to the plan or forget it.

* The **best brief description** of effective leadership comes from Jim Collins’ **Good to Great**. He found, through research, that “Level 5 Leadership” is “a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will.” Such a leader looks in the mirror to find causes for failures, and looks outward to find causes for success.

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