



## SAFETY VISION & STRATEGY

### DESCRIPTION

A set of principles and guidelines to help formulate and implement SHE strategies by proactively looking at the future, using your vision and goals to achieve measurable results.

### PURPOSE

To encourage the habit of:

- a. setting time aside to pose 'what-if' scenarios and think strategically
- b. translating strategy & vision into ACTION

### DETAILED GUIDELINES

1. The first step in thinking strategically is to do the **diagnostics**. Ask: "Where are we now, where do we want to be and what is stopping us from getting there?" Don't fall into the trap of directly jumping to a "vision" such as 'Zero Accidents'. This is often not the true vision, but the *result* of achieving the vision. The *vision* of 'All Employees to Own Safety' will ultimately *lead to* zero accidents.
2. It might seem like word-play, but **strategies, visions** and **goals** form the 3-pronged approach that is required to move forward. Goals without a vision limit our potential, visions without goals will stifle our progress and lacking an overall strategy will make our 'advance' much less effective and efficient.
3. The dictionary defines **strategy** as: *the art or science of the planning and conduct of war or in a business sense, a particular long-term plan for success*. As can be seen from this definition, strategy is based on a military notion of having a plan to fight your war, the How To for getting to your vision.
4. A **vision** is finding something larger than a goal, something bigger to shoot for. Something that moves you. A **dream** you can chase, something close to an obsession. A **vision** that inspires . . . to fuel the fire in your heart, provide more meaning to your efforts, and encourage you to confront the challenges that lie ahead. . . A dream or vision is a goal with wings . . . Organizations need a vision to fire people up, to engage the spirit, and provide direction. The vision is like a *fata mogana*, an oasis glimmering in the desert, which the leader can see, far in the distance. It's like a guiding star that gives direction on an evolutionary road of growth. Vision is using a compass.
5. **Goals** are much more concrete and measurable. They are like stepping stones along a journey towards a definite, known destination, the end that one has in mind. Using Goals is like using a road map and being pro-active in moving towards the vision.

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6. The **strategy**, on the other hand, is the manner in which one uses the stepping stones or goals to reach the end. It is the overall plan of using the **resources** and getting the **timing** correct, so that it will ultimately give one a unique advantage over the 'enemy' (competitor). It's often that **breakthrough**, that 'secret weapon' that gives you a unique advantage like Shaka's *umkhonto* (spear) and bullhorn tactic or Hitler's *Blitzkrieg*.
7. The most effective strategies are often **SIMPLE**, not at all complex, because your people can carry it in their minds and hearts, without having to refer to a manual. The old adage of **Less is More**, holds true here. I often use a numerical for safety. For example: **2010** = take **2** minutes before a job; make sure it will be **0** harm; and follow the **10** lifesaving rules.
8. However, this simplicity also makes a good strategy easier to copy or emulate. It follows, therefore, that there is a direct link between **strategy and tempo**. The world class companies formulate or renew their strategy quickly and then move down the road of putting it into practice - fast! They know that their window of opportunity of exploiting the benefits of their strategy is determined by the speed at which they move, react, take and implement decisions. They create a real sense of **URGENCY** around their strategy.
9. Don't forget to **communicate** clearly and frequently, because on paper the strategy will do you no good. It has to be in people's hearts and they must live the strategy! Everyone must have the end in mind, taking **ACTION** and doing everything, every time and everywhere in line with the chosen strategy. It must not be seen by the 'troops' as playing games by the 'generals'.
10. There is a paradox with **focusing** on action to implement the strategy. *You first need to lose your focus on the present in order to gain your focus on the future*. This means losing the attention on the present, the now and the urgent, in order to scan the horizon of the future. I am sure you get the picture, but this requires you to take time out to think and to focus.
11. Apart from translating the strategic plan into action, the other critical aspect is the fact that it is not a once-off, annual exercise, done in isolation, but an ongoing process of **review**, growth and change, of build up in the context of the current reality and future prospects. Just like in a battle, depending on how the situation develops means the strategy might have to be adapted to suit. This does not mean that at the first set back the strategy gets abandoned, but that reality checks are done continually. Part of the review should be the question of what is being done to make the transformation sustainable. So often people fall back on old habits as soon as we take the foot off the pedal.
12. As with all planning, more than half the benefit lies in taking the **time to think** through the issues, follow the process and focus on the future. It is an up-front investment in time with the objective of saving you time and wasted effort in the long-run. Remember that strategic planning is a **tool** to achieve an end and not an end in itself. Don't waste time trying to get it perfect. No one can see the future with 100% certainty. Accept that even the most carefully crafted strategy is not going to be implemented without many, often major changes, but that is exactly the point. It's a tool to help you make better choices about how to use your resources and which direction to follow. Without it you will be flying in the dark!
13. Strategic planning, **imagination and creativity** are close cousins. You have to be able to abandon existing paradigms and think the 'impossible' in order to come up with a truly new strategy that will give you a competitive advantage. Making **assumptions and risk-taking** fit in here as well, because by staying close to shore you will never discover the 'New World'.

# SAFETY STRATEGY & VISION

## METHOD / TECHNIQUE / TOOL

The **LEADER** is **accountable** for the safety strategy, for looking ahead to what will be done tomorrow (rather than what is being done today or, even worse, what has been done yesterday!), for thinking, for 'seeing' the end and formulating the plan of how to get there. The higher you go in the organization, the more critical this requirement becomes and it cannot be delegated! It is yours alone.

- ❖ Accept that a major part of your job is to **think** and to **formulate the strategy**.
- ❖ Do the **diagnostics**. Ask: "Where are we now, where do we want to be and what is stopping us from getting there?"
- ❖ Establish a **sense of urgency**.
- ❖ **Engage all stake holders** in the process – give people *Einspruchsrecht* (the right to partake in the decisions which affect them).
- ❖ **Communicate, communicate, communicate . . . Speak strategically** by using the correct, current terminology e.g. Zero Harm, Safety First, One Injury Is One Too Many, Accidents Hurt And Safety Does Not, etc. There is power in choosing the right words.
- ❖ **Commit to paper** what exactly the strategy is.
- ❖ **Empower** others to **ACTION** the strategy by taking risk.
- ❖ Remember the **golden rules** of Strategic planning:
  - Make the **time**
  - Keep it **simple**
  - Lose your **focus** on the present in order to gain your focus on the future
  - Avoid **perfectionism**
  - Translate into **ACTION**
  - Increase the **tempo** and create a sense of **URGENCY**
  - **Review** frequently, also your environmental map