



The Strategic Team



Art Waskey

Art Waskey is a speaker who truly delivers. In addition to a 45 year career in sales and marketing, Art is the author of multiple books on selling and a monthly column *The Art of Sales*. He shares these insights as an in demand event and conference speaker as well as leadership coach.

I work with small and medium business owners (SMBs) in the distribution sector and find they struggle with implementing meaningful strategic plans. As we know, the corporate strategy must start at the top of an organization and work its way down to every employee. Unfortunately, those at the top are often unsure which project should come next. This makes forming an effective plan difficult. To develop a strategy that everyone can understand and engage in, you need to build a strategic team.

Tap into creativity

Tap into the creative power of your organization to make your strategic plan. Here are three areas you need to focus on.

- The right executive team. In his book, [The Advantage](#), Patrick Lencioni discusses how to build a cohesive leadership team. He advises that the team must be small enough (three to ten people) to be effective. Members must trust one another and can be genuinely vulnerable with each other. He writes: **“At the heart of vulnerability lies the willingness of**

people to abandon their pride and their fear, to sacrifice their egos for the collective good of the team.”

- The right plan. When it comes to planning your strategy, I highly recommend you read *Traction* by [Gino Wickman](#). Wickman has developed the concept of the Six Key Components of The Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS). In his model, the EOS is led by a person that facilitates a team based on a long-term vision. Wickman says: **“With a clear long-term vision in place, you’re ready to establish short-term priorities that contribute to achieving your vision. You will establish the three to seven most important priorities for the company, the ones that must be done in the next 90 days.”** Wickman calls these priorities Rocks. Rocks are bite-size chunks that are broken down into the next steps with the goal of completion in 90 days. Team members meet regularly to engage in productive, unfiltered discussion of issues. The team leaves meetings with clear-cut, active, and specific agreements about decisions. They hold one another accountable to commitments and best behavior.



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Collective priorities and needs are focused on the larger organization rather than individual departments.

- The right communication. In a recent article, Art Petty of the Art Petty Group talked about the importance of communicating strategy to your organization. He wrote: “If the work of strategy is cloistered in a conference room, don’t expect people to understand it when you unveil the outcome and don’t expect them to be able to add value quickly. The more important question I ask is, ‘What have you done to appeal to them on a personal level and have them excited about the work of bringing a new strategy to life?’ This is, of course, the missing part. In my experience, **those close to the customers, business partners, and competitors, have the best views of what’s needed in a winning strategy.** It’s wrong that they’re often the last to learn a new strategy. Work unceasingly to fix this problem. Help them develop clarity on the simple concept of strategy and find ways to let them define how to get there.”¹

Several of my clients have found **that transparent quarterly reviews with all employees are an effective communication tool.** These reviews include sales, expenses, earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization (EBITDA), and the next steps

¹ Why your strategy isn’t like a cheeseburger, Art Petty, January 26, 2023

to all strategic plans. The sessions allow for open discussion, including questions and answers. Before these meetings, I advise that you preview your strategic plan’s next steps with key mid-level managers to develop a list of the probable questions and their respective answers.

Money is a great way to communicate the success of your strategic plan. Some of my clients pay a quarterly percent of EBITDA to the employees. The greatest morale booster is to recognize results as soon as they occur.

Connect and contribute

The ability to contribute and connect your business strategy to all levels of your team is important. Get your employees invested in being part of a cohesive strategic team. Select the right team to lead the charge, develop a plan that is right for your business, and use the right communication tools.

5 KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Develop a strategy that everyone can understand and engage in.
2. Individuals need to sacrifice their egos for the collective good of the team.
3. With a clear long-term vision you can establish short-term priorities.
4. Those close to customers, business partners and competitors, have the best views of what’s needed in a winning strategy.
5. Connecting your business strategy to all levels of your team is important.