

Raise the bar on performance

Strategy

Whether it's your first strategic planning session or your goal posts just moved, sound strategic planning keeps your focus on the main thing and your head in the game.

► **Form Follows Function**

Changing markets make us all go back to the drawing board at regular intervals. To keep your company or project moving forward in the right direction you first have to know where it is you're heading, and then tactics become effective.

Future focus is where we're going, why and by when. The heart of future focus is the clarity that the strategy and mission give to all of our current actions. Future focus determines the satisfaction you derive from your work. Here's a quick strategy check: are you working, working, just digging in the dirt, or are you gratified because you're creating a garden? Are you just scraping your knuckles on stuck engine parts or are you deeply engaged in building a racecar? Focus and strategy matter a great deal.

Strategy gives shape and context to our tactics and strengthens team and organizational alignment. Key performance indicators link tactics to strategy and people get rewarded when they impact the KPI metrics and move your project, your division and your enterprise ever closer to the strategic goals.

► **Want a Tiger in your Tank?**

Get clear about your mission. Is your focus focused or are you all over the map – or somewhere in between? The focus of a team, whether a two person partnership or a multi-person C-Suite or Leadership Team (a team of cross-divisional senior leaders or managers), the elements that put a tiger in your tank are the focus and alignment of what it is the team wants to accomplish. We usually call this the team mission. Mission serves the purpose of aligning focus and coordinating your actions. Without a clear end-game, you'll waffle and stall, restart and then stall again.

Mission shapes behavior as form follows function because it sets priorities. Some missions require a high level of collaboration and others require an extraordinary amount of individual contributions and how we'd best behave is determined by our mission. Collaboration for the sake of collaboration can be fun and interesting but if it's not a critical success factor it can also be a total waste of time and energy. How we interact should be the most effective way that gets the job done or the mission accomplished.

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