



Why Strategic Planning Fails

It's another off-site meeting where top executives go through the compulsory huddle to determine the future of Acme, Inc. Often described as grueling, mind-numbing, tedious and a "total waste of time," the annual strategic planning session continues as a corporate ritual.

Management Guru Peter Drucker is attributed with the insight that

*"Culture eats strategy for lunch."
- Peter Drucker*

"Culture eats strategy for lunch." And, with that quote in mind, corporate executives, strategic planning consultants and the world of academia have argued over the validity of Drucker's quote.

But what is culture in a company? It's not seen, but is so powerful. It's like corporate DNA – how a company behaves shows its true vision and values.

Have a look at [Culture from Corporate Culture Pros.](#)

Many companies try to fit a strategic plan into a culture that is not ready for change, that is toxic or where there is no alignment between the plan and the people.

Toxic Cultures kill strategy because there is a lack of trust toward leadership. People don't trust leaders who say one thing



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- Aluminum Siding
- Glass and Glazing
- Industrial and Automotive Tools



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and do another. Leaders who only look out for themselves and don't create a "Circle of Safety," (Simon Sinek's concept of building trust), will find they have a tough time implementing strategies and they don't know why. These leaders don't understand that trust is earned and it starts at the top.

Leaders have to be visible and involved to earn trust. They have to be top-notch communicators and repeat their messages over and over and over again. And, then some more.

Toxic cultures are an environment where low trust is the daily special. Blame and lack of accountability abound. No one takes responsibility for their actions and

there are no consequences. There is also no acknowledgement of failures and therefore no learning from failure.

In a toxic culture people are afraid to share their ideas, try new innovative processes or have robust conversations because leadership punishes those behaviors.

In toxic cultures people get exhausted by the energy that is spent on dealing with issues that never get resolved. They are exhausted from the time it takes to deal with leadership that changes capriciously and embraces a "management flavor of the month." Employees learn that if they wait long enough, there will be another new idea and they don't really have to change after all.

Leaders are toxic when they give every initiative and issue the same urgency and don't create clear priorities for the organization. Without clear structure and defined direction, employees lose their passion and enthusiasm for their work.

JEFF BLEACHER



"We recently went through our strategic planning for 2015 and it was all done with the underlying idea of planning for what our unique culture can support. With that in mind, we are able to make more progress, be more realistic about what we can accomplish and increase our productivity because our people are aligned with the strategies. Our culture supports our strategies."

KEN FALK (on the right)



"A company's culture is often much more evident to those outside the company than those inside the company. Culture is evident in how people treat customers and vendors on a daily basis. It's so important to monitor your own culture and make sure that everyone is on the same page with how we deliver our services. We want a culture of client and employee respect. Integrity, honesty and communication are all values that we live every day."

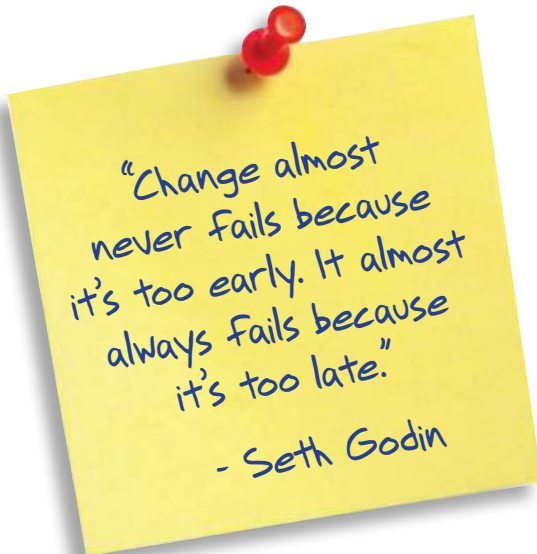
*"Customers will never love a company until the employees love it first."
- Simon Sinek*



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Creating a Healthy Culture:

Changing from a toxic culture to a healthy culture requires strong leadership that will engage with their people on a regular basis to build trust. Leaders in a healthy culture are honest, willing to listen and make decisions that keep the organization strong and help their team to achieve clearly defined goals.



No matter what industry you are in, no matter how good your strategic plan, without a healthy culture you will struggle to get to your goals. Before you begin your strategic planning do an assessment of your culture. Then, you'll be able to be one of the companies who can claim a successful strategic plan.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

“Leaders Eat Last: Why Some Teams Pull Together and Others Don’t”

Author: Simon Sinek

Available on [Amazon](#) and on [TED Talks](#)

“Get A Grip: How to Get Everything You Want from Your Entrepreneurial Business”

Author: Gino Wickman

Available on [Amazon](#) and on [YouTube](#)

LARRY REICH



“Healthy cultures allow for robust conversations that help to move a company forward. In a culture where everyone is afraid to voice their ideas, there is likely to be less progress and less profitability. Our clients who have developed healthy cultures see the results on their bottom line.”

PATRICK GENDRUE (on the left)



“Leaders in healthy cultures inspire their employees and bring out the best in them. Authentic leaders connect with their people and help everyone become their best selves. As cultures get healthy you can see people begin to engage more, they want to express their ideas more and the entire work team becomes more passionate.”

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