



FROM THE DESK OF BOB WILSON

**Maximizing Profits Through People
A CEO to CEO Quarterly Newsletter -- 5-15-00**

Some Thoughts on Strategic Planning

Dear fellow CEO:

This is the first of a series of quarterly letters which is intended to get you thinking about how best to maximize profits through people. I hope you find it helpful.

I've always fancied myself a strategic thinker.

Time is allocated to envisioning the future and how our organization can position itself to maximize opportunities.

Staying on top of things is important, too. Reading the Wall Street Journal daily. When two respected colleagues recommend a business book as worth reading, I buy it, read it and try to synthesize what's useful in it that our clients or we could use.

In meetings with client leaders, we inevitably are drawn to discussions of those strategic issues facing the client company. We've even built that avocation into a business -- facilitating a number of strategic planning meetings for our clients. We're pretty good at it, too.

So, it took me by surprise when Judy (one of our consultants, whom many of you work with and know to be an intelligent, strategically oriented woman in her own right), expressed a desire for us to have a strategic planning meeting.

"We already do strategic planning", I said. And I started fumbling for my latest pronouncement, produced just a few months prior. It included a mission statement, values statement, vision statement and 2000 objectives. It was clear, concise, well written. A terrific document, even saying so myself.

"No," she said. "You already do strategic planning. We, as a company, however, do not." Then she said the same thing to me that I've said to clients who do not have a clear strategy. "Unless the whole organization knows where it's going and the senior players have input into the process, there is no strategic focus. And without strategic focus, how can our organization create a successful future?" This stung.

But, maybe she had a point.

So, after a couple of fits and starts, "we" recently finished a strategic planning session with all of our consultants. We discussed our corporate strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. We wrote a mission statement and a values statement. We set out a five-year plan and specific 2000 objectives. Here's some of what the team came up with through a series of exercises:

MISSION STATEMENT

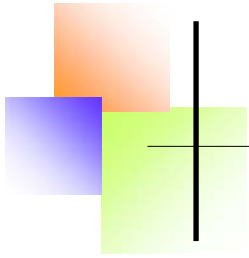
The mission of Bob Wilson and Associates is to profitably provide client companies and management teams with the knowledge and power to optimize their talent and achieve their profit potential.

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RESOURCES™

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VALUES STATEMENT

- A. We will be respected as a company of the highest ethical standards. Therefore,
 - 1. We will always operate honestly and ethically.
 - 2. We will do what we say we'll do.
- B. The people at BWA matter at BWA. We recognize that life should be a balance between work and play.. Therefore,
 - 1. Excellent performance will be rewarded.
 - 2. We will operate as a team - wherever possible helping each other.
 - 3. We will always treat each other with respect.
 - 4. Doing our jobs is important and will be valued and evaluated. But, family comes first.
- C. We enter into a virtual business partnership with our clients whenever we work for or with them. We wish to be known as an organization that has our clients' interests at heart. Therefore,
 - 1. We will always act in the best interests of our clients.
 - 2. We will do our best to amaze our customers with the promptness of our response and the value of our service.

Much better than what I'd done on my own.

And when we came to 5 year strategy and 2000 objectives, the results were significantly more aggressive than what I'd done individually. There were a lot more ideas, too. And, because the team is behind the plans' development, we have a better chance of hitting these very aggressive targets than we had of hitting the merely aggressive targets I'd developed.

The total output was something to be proud of. Every consultant team member shares in the pride of creation because they created the result. And they will continue to share in our creation of the future as we go forward. We are committed to it together. And that maximizes all of our effort and enthusiasm. And in the process, just makes all of our work more fun.

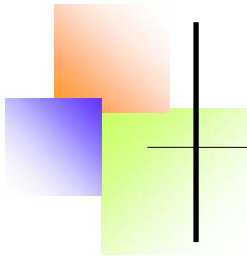
In all of our businesses, it is our people who make our businesses successful. Or unsuccessful.

"Our people make our businesses successful". We all say it. But how often do we do it? Where our people create the future of our company, the company will be rewarded when those people strive to make that future happen. Where we "make the people feel" like they are creating the future, rather than being a real part of the creation effort, they see themselves living in a Dilbert comic strip. The laugh's on them, and they're not laughing.

As leaders who seek to employ additional leaders in our businesses, we must allow them to participate in the leadership of those businesses. And give them the freedom to exercise leadership in their own specific areas of responsibility.

Many times we think we have succeeded in this endeavor, but fail. Our failure most frequently occurs because we define, as I had, leadership for our direct reports as their aggressiveness in following our commands. That breeds organizational sheep. And unhappy ones at that.

To lead amongst leaders we must ask our fellows for advice. We must yield to participation in strategic leadership. We must be willing to listen to and follow the ideas of our strongest team members.



In this, we face a real paradox. We may have worked our whole career to achieve a leadership position, but to maximize our potential for success, we need to delegate leadership to truly lead. To truly maximize the potential of our people we must be willing to give up the control we frequently want the most. But how good do we want to be?

Thanks for reading. I look forward to receiving your thoughts or comments by phone at 317-574-1550, or by e-mail to bwilson@bobwilsonconsulting.com. And if you've got time, check out our web site at www.bobwilsonconsulting.com.

Sincerely,

Bob Wilson, President