

Maximizing Results Through People
A CEO to CEO Quarterly Newsletter

11/15/06

Some Thoughts on Strategic Planning – Part 2

Dear Fellow CEO:

It's been more than six years (May of 2000) since we initiated the CEO Newsletter. It came into existence as the result of our first strategic planning meeting that April. We began the process anew this past September and I thought I'd share some of the results and benefits we've achieved from our efforts.

A number of issues led us to conclude that it was again time to go through the process. We felt we needed to tear down the organization in a thorough SWOT analysis – revisiting all of our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Once that was complete, we'd need to develop a 5-year strategy (Vision) and break that into component near term objectives – headed by specific people driven by definite time lines.

None of us had any preconceived notions of what the results of the session would be. Our business is good. Our people are pretty happy doing what they do. We just knew that there are always things that could be done better. We just wanted to see if we could figure out what those things could and would be.

Because I'd led the process for a number of our clients, it was natural for me to facilitate our original strategic planning session. Going into our second event, I thought it would be best to hand the facilitation to our Heather Haas. She's conducted the sessions for others and I thought her facilitation would allow a more participative environment for us. Additionally, it would give her additional experience with some tough contributors. She did a terrific job. Most importantly, it put me in the role of a participant – this was a critical element to the success of the meeting because the discussions were colleague-to-colleague not boss to subordinate.

The first day of the meeting was dedicated to the SWOT. We followed the format that we've successfully executed for more than 25 clients over the years. This involves two different people answering a series of questions about 20 categories of the business (like marketing, finance, employees, new opportunities and competition). It really is an ugly, unpleasant process because the focus, by necessity, needs to be on not only what's right; but, an un-doctored, blemished, clear picture of what's wrong. Listening to the input, as the primary architect of the business, isn't like hearing a Brahms lullaby. It's more the strident cacophony of Hindemith – and, you can't get up and leave at intermission because you know the music is good for you – and the business.

The second day we took all of the information of the SWOT and used it to create our vision for BWA in 2011 and what we're going to start doing now to achieve it. I really have a unique advantage in running a company like BWA – we are blessed with a team of very smart people. When you bring a team like that together to think about how to craft a different future, the results can be amazing. And, they were. I thought I'd share a few of them with you.

1. Since our first meeting in 2000, we've been the #1 P. I. licensee in the United States (and 2nd in the World behind the Licensee who holds Europe) four times. We intend to continue our track record of better than average growth and superior delivery in our P. I. business.
2. Additionally, recognizing we have smart, mature, well-rounded business people as our consultants who understand the problems and concerns of our clients; we want to position ourselves better to advantage that. Historically, we have taken a purely strategic role in helping clients solve problems – pointing out and advising as to what should be done but not becoming intimately involved in the doing of it. Going forward, we're encouraging our consultants to have a much freer hand to delve into those areas where clients have needs and our consultants have specific expertise.

3. We intend to build a team of consultants who are business solution providers who will position us as not only P. I. consultants – but, as our clients' consultants of choice for any problem that involves people. We're in the process of adding three people to our team to help build that future.
4. We're not sure what it will be yet, but we're looking to change our name from Bob Wilson & Associates to something that's more reflective of our role as a consulting company who maximizes results through people. I won't be a part of the organization forever. We want to build a consulting company with a name that indicates who we are and what we do that will grow along with us. We look for this name change to take place in our near future.

And, we plan to continue to use our Mission and Values from 2000 as our bedrock:

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 potential.

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.

The last couple of months, as we've begun to implement the new objectives of our planning process, have been very exciting. Our people (including me) are energized by what we believe we can accomplish. The future is unknown, but our perspective towards it is bright – because we know what we want our future to be. And we'll do our best to make what we want happen.

If you don't know what you want your future to be, you should consider going through the strategic planning process. And, if you don't know where to begin that process, give your consultant or me a call. We can definitely help. We've made it work both for others and for ourselves. We can make it work for you too.

Thanks for reading.



Bob Wilson, President
Bob Wilson & Associates, Inc. (for now)