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Welcome to 2016



We wish all our readers a happy and prosperous Quality year in 2016.

In this month's edition we give our readers feedback from a number of SAQI members who took part in our National Quality Week "Following the Road to Excellence" campaign. There will be more feedback to follow in later editions.

We also feature a "tongue in cheek" article by our colleague in India, Prashant Hoskote on Organizational Excellence and "How to fail".

The SAQI plans for the year ahead are also shared and we are focusing on improved communication with our members. We also carry an article on the importance of strategic planning from our regular contributor Terry Booysen. Our schools specialist Richard Hayward also contributes with an article on "An attitude of gratitude".

SAQI is currently reviewing the DTS ISO 9002 guideline document for the introduction of ISO 9001:2015. We would be interested to receive comment from anyone who is also studying this document.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank our retiring Chairman Lucas Moloi who has served us in this capacity for over 4 years and other retiring board members for their loyal service to SAQI. A call for new board nominations will be sent out shortly and a member meeting will be called in due course to elect new board members and they will elect a new Chairman.

Paul Harding
SAQI MD



Organizational Excellence Frameworks – How to Fail

A Dozen Reasons Your Organization Should Not do Excellence Frameworks

by Prashant Hoskote

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I often wonder why some organizations embrace excellence frameworks and others struggle to accept them as a way of life. At meetings and conferences, I am asked a variety of questions – Are these for everyone? Can it really fit in business, health care, not for profit and even in education sectors? Aren't they complicated? Are there real examples of how and where they truly worked for organizations? Can I really implement something that is so systematic? Don't they cost a lot? These are usually apprehensions of people who want to be talked out of it.

These questions, and others, prompted me to put down some tongue-in-cheek thoughts about why excellence frameworks fail and what these frameworks require. If you intend to implement any excellence frameworks, be it Baldrige, EFQM, Deming Prize, the Australian model, or any such equivalent, be warned.

Reason #12 – No strong external and internal relationships. You have to build strong relationships with external suppliers, partners, stakeholders, as well as build internal relationships with your staff. Additionally, these frameworks require an organization to develop performance metrics on how to measure and evaluate success with those relationships. *The danger is, such relationships may break down barriers, improve teamwork, set higher performance requirements, which could actually improve efficiency and effectiveness of operational processes. This could disrupt the status quo.*

Reason #11 – Train without action. Organizations often embark on an Excellence Framework by executing a Big Bang training plan to make all staff aware of the framework. As Dr Joseph M Juran once said, "Training without action is always forgotten, training with action is always remembered". Start with the senior leaders, let them be the first few set of Examiners or Assessors. Staff at the grass root level doesn't need to understand what Framework you are using. They only need to know, implement and improve just that part of the framework that impacts them. Aligned training might result in cost savings and targeted improvements. *But it could upset your training department if they enjoy deploying high impact, highly branded, costly training programs.*

Reason #10 – Disregard free consulting advice. If you use any Excellence Framework and undergo an assessment or examination of your organization, you will receive a feedback

report that is the most inexpensive consulting assistance designed to improve your organization. Trained professional examiners or assessors will provide your organization with ways to improve and maximize resources. *But we wouldn't want a detailed feedback report from strangers highlighting where you can focus your efforts, especially when some of them don't even understand your industry.*

Reason #9 – Think we are doing as best as we can. If you use excellence frameworks, you will receive weird looks from other organizations and from insiders who don't understand why the status quo isn't adequate. Your organization will work toward world class performance and outperform your competition. But then, you actually have to improve your organization. *Frankly, it can be much easier to run an organization based on experience and gut feel of your managers. After all, that's why you hired them in the first place.*

Reason #8 – Confuse activity with results. When you receive your assessment feedback report, two things could happen:

1. Your organization might treat it like an audit report and pick up 'non-conformities' for 'closure'
2. Organizations typically look to address all Opportunities For Improvement at one go and in fact, ignore the Strengths. Am reminded of good old Dr Juran's quote again, "You cannot eat an elephant in one bite, but you can... if you eat it one bite at a time".

Excellence Frameworks encourage prioritization and intelligent use of resources. Money, time, energy, and talent can be better focused on what is important. Such alignment can cause an organization to actually increase capacity and use fewer resources. *But all this might create capacity for our staff. Reduction of unnecessary hiring could cause turmoil in your Human Resources department.*

Reason #7 – Don't communicate with staff. If you use excellence frameworks, senior leadership and management will have to improve communications throughout the organization. This may mean meetings with frontline employees (management by walking around) to better understand business issues and how it can be improved, it could mean team huddles, webcasts, town-hall meetings. Leaders and employees will have to be honest and

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open about what they can, and more importantly, cannot do. *But many leaders may be uncomfortable mingling with staff. They may prefer to just tell them what to do and see what happens.*

Reason #6 – Misunderstand and misuse tools. Excellence frameworks do not replace tools and techniques such as Lean, Six Sigma, Problem Solving, Kaizen, PDCA etc. On the contrary, these tools are needed to drive breakthrough improvements, reduce costs and improve customer satisfaction. But be careful. *Employees involved in these improvements may become more engaged and outspoken about what processes aren't working. It's a slippery slope from employee involvement to empowerment and on to an employee driven organization.*

Reason #5 – No action planning. Using excellence frameworks requires planning. You may be required to develop short and long-term goals that have to be deployed across the organization. Something could happen and plans might change. You will be thinking about whether your organization is agile enough to respond to changes. This may force you to develop alternative plans. Then you will want to tell everyone in the organization about your plans so they can help you execute them. *So when will you actually do real work, if you have to plan so much?*

Reason #4 – No benchmarking and best practice sharing. You will want to understand your competitors and how your performance compares with theirs. You will start analyzing your industry and market. This will need you to discover world class organizations that you may want to benchmark with. All this will give you insight into aspects of your business you hadn't thought of. Then you will be thinking about how this knowledge can create a sustainable organization. *See how, once you get started, one thing leads to another and soon you are out of your comfort zone.*

Reason #3 – No organizational alignment. Excellence frameworks will require daily work to be based on a strategic plan. The organization's Work Systems will need to align with the Strategic Plan. Work will have to be evaluated continuously. Customers/patients will have to be consulted to understand how well you are doing to address their needs and expectations. The framework targets work, people, and projects. *But all this seems like getting too many people to be aligned, all this seems like it's a slow process.*

Reason #2 – No accountability. There's too much accountability and responsibility up and down the organization. You are paid the same whether you effectively apply these world class excellence frameworks or not. You are already tired when you leave work and you don't need a rigid set of priorities linked to your performance appraisal. *All anyone wants is to keep your head down, avoid any extra work and hope for the best.*

Finally, the number one reason organizations fail to achieve success with an Excellence Framework.

Reason #1 – Delegate too much. This might sound cliché but the hard reality is, CEOs often delegate implementation of such

things to a 'Quality department' and expect them to wave a magic wand to transform the business. The CEO may be there for an announcement or an introductory training. They may say all the right things, and then tell their Quality department to make it happen. This trite approach can ensure failure. There is a reason why 'Leadership' is the first Category in all Excellence Frameworks. This has to be driven by the senior leader, not just in speeches, but in continuous action, visibility and support. *Mr CEO, don't even think about implementing an Excellence Framework unless you will unwaveringly lead the charge from the front.*

All kidding aside, let me get back to the questions I started with which represent concern about starting this journey. I have worked with excellence frameworks since over twenty years. I can say without any doubt in my mind that excellence frameworks work and can deliver dramatic results. They represent structure and discipline. But they only work if the organization is serious about improvement demonstrates belief, grit and determination. If the organization is not serious it will only deliver frustration and agony!

In the words of Dr Juran, "Look after the process, and the product will look after itself"!

About the Author:



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SAQI 2016 Strategic focus

by Team SAQI

Dear Members, as we enter a very challenging 2016, the leadership of SAQI has developed our main **"Focus Points"** for 2016. The SAQI management have had various conversations with many of our corporate as well as our individual members over the last year. The commitment from our Quality Profession to educate, develop, and improve ourselves as individuals and our companies is still very strong in South Africa.

This is why we at SAQI have decided that our Number one key focus point for the year of 2016, will be **"INTERACTION"**. We all have probably seen this quote from Benjamin Franklin:

Tell me, and I will **FORGET**,
Teach me, and I will **REMEMBER**,
Involve me and I will **LEARN**.



This is exactly what our focus for 2016 is going to be. Through discussions with some of you, we have identified the need for more face-to-face communication opportunities with our members and SAQI's Leadership.

2016 Interaction Forums

We have identified the following forums to enhance our interaction and communication in the SAQI community.

1) **Quarterly Plant Visits:** Some of our members have identified

their willingness to host a Plant/factory visit for all interested SAQI members and individuals. We have planned 4 visits (1 per quarter), for 2016. The purpose of these visits is firstly for the hosting company to "show off" their quality plants to the rest of the members, and secondly for the other members to see, benchmark and learn from your fellow SAQI member. We invite any of our corporate members who would like to host a quarterly visit at their plant, to contact the SAQI office.

2) **An evening with SAQI:** This initiative came about, especially from our young quality professionals. Visits to our members always turn out to be too short, as many of you have so many questions and need so much advice on how to approach quality, improve quality and improve the commitment and support from your own company's leadership to support quality. Hence the idea to start with a Quarterly "Evening with SAQI" forum mainly focused at our young professional. This however does not exclude some of you "Older" professionals. These forums will be held after hours at our SAQI offices in Pretoria. More information to follow on these forums.....

3) **Ask Paul (Q&A):** We have decided to experiment with adding an **"Ask Paul, Q&A"** section in our SAQI newsletter. Although we do get many interesting quality related articles from our members, we feel that there might be some topics we do not cover. We know that there are many questions that some of you might like to ask and receive more information. The **"Ask Paul Q&A"** Section hopes to answer pressing questions, and we will have a panel of Senior Members and Specialists, who will support Paul in answering some of your burning questions. Please feel free at start sending some of your questions through to Paul, for us to kick off this session in February. Paul's e-mail address is exec@saqi.co.za

4) **Join our Linked In group:** We currently have over 200 members on the SAQI "Linked In" group but we need more participation. Join the group and then post your comments or ask your questions and either SAQI staff or other members will join in the conversation.

We would appreciate your comments on our planned initiatives, and hope that these will be to the benefit of you, our quality members in 2016 and beyond.

More information can be obtained from Jacques Snyders Senior Member SAQI:
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Lancet Laboratories World Quality Week 2015



by Hilary de Fleuriot (Deputy Quality Manager)

This year Lancet became members of the South African Quality Institute and adopted their slogan for World Quality Week - "Following the road to excellence". **We adapted this slightly to "Following the road to Diagnostic Excellence"**, as this is our core function as a diagnostic company. The slogan and logo lead us to the idea of a road-race and how the ultimate goal – to win the race – cannot be accomplished alone. Everyone has a role to play in the process and if one of those role players is missing or not providing the required input, then it becomes harder to finish the race, let alone to become the owner of one of the coveted gold medals!

From this small beginning, the idea for World Quality Day 2015 grew. So what is each department's contribution to the Lancet "product"? What is their role in Team Lancet? Many departments work quietly in the background and we do not realise what a huge impact their daily functions have on the smooth running of the Lancet production line and the ultimate quality product – a timeous, quality result that the clinician can trust in the diagnosis and monitoring of the patient. Quality is not something that can be added at the end of a process, it has to be included at every step and the final quality product is only as good as the quality that has been built in along the way.

Something for all of us to remember is that we are not running individual races in Lancet, we are running relays which cross many countries across the African continent! Our World Quality Day idea was rolled out across Africa at numerous host sites and each department was asked to provide representatives to man a table at an event on World Quality Day in order to tell other staff about their department.

Wow! I don't think any of us on the organising committee could have foreseen that this simple instruction would blossom into the wonderful events that took place during World Quality Week 2015.

At the Richmond event we were blown away by the enthusiasm of the department representatives and it showed in the number of staff members that attended the event to learn about other departments. The venue was packed from start to finish! **Following on from the success of our World Quality Week events, we are running a competition for all Lancet staff members to make suggestions for improving quality.**

In the book "Juiced!" by Mike Lipkin and Arthur Gillis, they discuss the "Diamond Concept" – when someone comes up with an idea, it's like they have mined a diamond. But the idea is still

imperfect, it is a rough diamond, but has value, so cannot be discarded. It must be passed around and as it is passed around, more people polish and add facets to it. At the end of the process, the company has a jewel because each person has added their insight to it.

There is a possible jewel in every idea or suggestion, we just need to pass the idea around!



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Celebrating National Quality Week at Rand Water

Rand Water's first National Quality Week was celebrated with a comprehensive programme from the 4- 13 November 2015. Roadshows started at Rand Water's Vereeniging site, moved to other sites and concluded at Head Office. The theme adopted from SAQI was "Following the road to excellence", which was personalised into Rand Water's quality theme for 2015/2016 which states that: "Quality is a journey and not a destination".

During the roadshows, each site Executive Manager was required to deliver a speech and recommit to the organisation's quality culture. Following that, the Corporate SHEQ Manager spoke about the journey Rand Water has taken to ensure that the requirements of the ISO 9001 standard are met, and emphasised that commitment from all employees is still required as we look into the ISO 9001:2015 implementation phase. Other highlights from the Roadshows included:

- Industrial theatre edutainment which focused on customer service.
- A speech by Jacques Snyders from SAQI on 13 November 2015.
- Questions and answers sessions which included prize giving.

The distribution of Quality Times articles through Rand Water's internal communications channels. This was to ensure that the message was relayed to employees who could not attend the roadshows. The articles targeted problematic issues as per ISO 9001:2008 audits trend analysis.

Management, Quality Management Officers, Quality Champions and employees have all made the first Rand Water Quality Week a memorable one.

Ms Nompumelelo Nwankwo
Corporate Quality Management Advisor



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SGB-Cape World Quality Week 2015

by Ms Nompumelelo Nwankwo – Corporate Quality Management Advisor

National Quality Week

09 - 13 November 2015

SGB-Cape is a member of SAQI (South African Quality Institute) and in celebrating National Quality Week, the theme this year is “following the road to excellence”

Our key message for National Quality Week 2015 were:

- In order for SGB-Cape to follow the road to excellence, teamwork plays a vital role.
- Creating awareness on the importance of teamwork, will help us reach a point of excellence.
- Teamwork in the workplace offers the company and staff the ability to become more familiar with each other and learn how to work together in order to ensure the work is done correctly the first time.

In Celebrating National Quality Week within SGB-Cape, the following activities were planned and implemented:

- A national Competition was launched, and this competition was based on the new ISO 9001:2015 standard. The bulletin covers the general requirements from the standard, which in turn will help the end user to understand and implement the standard with excellence. A winner was chosen from each branch and was awarded with a R500 voucher.
- Branches / sites / Head Office had displayed defected equipment and complying equipment in the reception areas to create awareness of conforming and non-conforming products.
- Pictures were displayed on difference days, to inform and motivate employees on the importance of Quality and the role Quality plays within our business.
- Various activities were scheduled each day eg. Quality 30 seconds, Hangman and building puzzles, which are fun games but at the same time, was facilitated to create awareness and promote teamwork amongst the workforce. Employees were placed in teams and given crepe paper, pipe cleaner, string and instructions on how to make flowers. The winning team at the end of the week was awarded.

It was absolutely mind blowing to see the end product of the flowers which the teams made. It was well thought through, and done with excellence. It showed initiative and creativity.



Last year we have understood that Quality is beyond standards, it's a way of life. From the pen you use to write with, it wouldn't work effectively if it has not been Quality checked first. To the shoes you wear, it wouldn't have lasted this long or even fit your feet size if it was not Quality checked and approved. Quality is everywhere and can be seen in everything.



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In saying that, for SGB-Cape to reach excellence in Quality, we need to come together as a team and work effectively together so that excellence can be seen in our work as well as in our customer satisfaction.

We even gave a meaning to Quality using the ISO 9001:2015 standard, the following descriptions were identified:

Q – The **Quality** management principles are customer focus, leadership, engagement of people, process approach, improvement, evidence-based decision making and relationship management.

U – **Uniformity** within the organisation.

A – The **Ability** to demonstrate conformity to specified Quality Management System Requirements.

L – Top management shall demonstrate **Leadership** and commitment with respect to the Quality Management System.

I – The organisation shall determine and select opportunities for **Improvement** and **Implement** any necessary actions to meet customer requirements and enhance customer satisfaction.

T – Risk-based **Thinking** is essential for achieving an effective Quality Management System. The concept risk-based Thinking has been implicit in previous editions of this International Standard including, for example, carrying out preventive action to eliminate potential non-conformities, analysing any non-conformities that do occur and taking action to prevent recurrence that is appropriate for the effects of the non-conformity.

Y – Big Question **WHY?** Why do we need to implement a Quality Management System – For the following reasons, Standardisation, Conformity, Accuracy, Performance, Discipline, Responsibility, above all Customer Satisfaction which = EXCELLENCE!

Some of the comments from the participants:

Janine Swart

I have learnt that Team Work is very important. Just by each person in a team playing their part, putting skills and knowledge together and through planning you can do great things. Thank you for all the effort Maxcine and Darshan have put into the quality week. It was great fun.

Nathan Naicker

My learning from the quality week was "Do it right the first time". We learnt over the week about teamwork, excellence, customer satisfaction etc. to me, all this should lead us to "Do it right the first time". If we "Do it right the first time" there will be no need to re-do a task, service or project which could lead us to additional cost, additional time and may jeopardise our relationship with clients.

Melissa Oelofsen

Thank you for the effort you put into the quality week. It was lots of fun, I really enjoyed it. I have learnt that team work is very important and that Quality is everybody's responsibility. It also made me realise that there is so much more to learn from Scaffolding and all the components, what is compliant and what is non-compliant etc. Our QMS is there for a reason and is very important that we understand it well in order to comply and work towards a standard of quality. Can't wait for next year....

Johan Deysel

Thank you for inviting me to the Quality week. The Quality awareness

week was very well presented. It was fun working in our team. SGB-Cape set an example to all the other companies when it comes to quality. Not only quality in the work place but with the employees as well. I am proud to be working for a company like SGB-Cape.

Lindiwe Thobela

I thought Quality only applied to the food we eat, clothes we wear and few other things only to discover that quality is everywhere, the past week was an eye opener for me. I now eat, sleep, think quality and I also learnt the importance of achieving an effective quality management system. And yes great things are achieved in working as a team.

Louis Mokoena

The whole week was a great experience for me. What I have learned about quality is the importance of teamwork and that "QUALITY" itself is strict and consistent and it requires a commitment to certain standards to achieve a good product in order to satisfy specific customer or user ... as Maxcine said "Quality is not only something to be applied in a work environment, but everywhere you go."

Thabo Modumaela

I believe that quality should be taken as serious as if it was personal, for instance if I buy a certain item from the shop, then find out later that it is of poor quality I get offended and go as far as asking for my money back and even see the responsible person to express my anger. The same stance should be taken at the workplace, the service or the goods that I produce, I should ask myself if I will pay for them if I was the customer based on the quality that it has been made of.

Luan Sheffryk

We were colleagues from different departments and together we worked as a team and showed that quality is teamwork, therefore going forward, I hope that we can continue the process of taking quality to the next level as it is everybody's responsibility.

Trevor Smart

The events from the quality week for me was a very good experience. Friendships were made, knowledge was gained and teamwork was reflected. We take quality for granted as we use it in our everyday life without even knowing it. From the way our children get dressed for school till the way we make our supper is all quality orientated. It's safe to say that quality is everywhere and in everything and that we should follow the road to excellence if we want to have a better lifestyle and to be a better person for our families, the Waco family, and ourselves. Thank you all for a super quality week and let's make next year an even better one.



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Strategic Planning is Critical to Business Sustainability

by Jene' Palmer (CGF Lead Independent Consultant)

Do you have your finger on the 'pulse' of your business? Is your organisation equipped to survive the pressures in a changing business and global environment? These are critical questions which should be asked and answered by board members and senior executives alike.

The accelerating rate of socio-economic change makes it imperative for organisations to be able to adopt new business models and manage non-traditional competition, new technologies, expanding markets, new products and the like. If an organisation is not agile, it will not be able to keep up with its competition and it will soon lose its market position. Underpinning this agility is the development of a comprehensive business strategy that outlines decisions and actions pertaining to all business resources, thereby providing a benchmark against which to measure the organisation's performance.

Strategic leadership is key in creating and maintaining a successful business

Business strategy should always be driven by a strategic leader; the visionary force who will help to permeate a culture of learning and innovation throughout the organisation. Strategic leaders are renowned for embracing risk-for-profit models and they usually adopt a dynamic approach in managing the organisation. These leaders have embraced technology which they have used not only to revolutionise their business, but also to extend their business models beyond their traditional business boundaries.

The world has moved on from the era of industrialisation and mass production, to a global market fuelled by 'always-on' connectivity. While this new business world offers many opportunities, it also brings with it new challenges, and many organisations have failed to adapt their business strategy accordingly.

"Strategy is not the consequence of planning, but the opposite: its starting point."

Professor Henry Mintzberg
(McGill University)

In the wake of the volatile market dynamics and on-going economic turbulence, creating long-term sustainability for an organisation is critical. Whether an organisation is gearing for growth or battling for survival, strategic leadership is essential in developing the agility and sound decision-making capability which is required to build and maintain a competitive edge.

Unlimited global choices

The creation of a global, connected, 'always-on' world, driven by the rapid and constant evolution of technology, has created a business environment in which consumers are far more enlightened than in previous times. In addition, consumers can now obtain products and solutions tailored to their precise needs from virtually anywhere in the world, thanks to the explosion of eCommerce and the Internet. In a world where consumers have unlimited choices of products and services on virtual shelf spaces, differentiating a business has become increasingly difficult. The same approach that proved successful in the world of standardised products and limited choices is no longer viable, and clinging to these outmoded strategies leads to a downward spiral in profitability and ultimately sustainability. If you cannot adequately satisfy the needs of the consumer, it is highly likely that they will take their business elsewhere.



Compounding this challenge are multiple economic, political, social and legislative pressures. A turbulent economy and fluctuating exchange rates can cripple cash flow, making corrective action difficult when things go wrong. In addition, legacy business structures and management strategies often result in poor information gathering and a reactive approach to change. The ability to make sound business decisions is often delayed by a lack of relevant information and this can paralyse decision-making, such that it may also lead to reluctance of accepting responsibility for any form of action (or corrective action). The speed with which change occurs can also be overwhelming, and an inability to adapt to the changing environment will inevitably result in a decline of business. A robust Corporate Governance Framework® can provide board members (in particular non-executives) and senior management with the information they need to be able to quickly assess those areas of the business which require immediate attention.

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Sustainable organisations are not only focussed on profit; they also recognise the importance of properly managing people and the environment (planet). Consumers are more socially aware than ever, and they use their purchasing power to communicate their opinions about labour practices and working conditions. Poor working environments thus not only result in high staff turnover, which negatively impacts productivity, they also often lead to eroded brand equity and reduced profitability. Moreover, the sustainability of the planet is becoming a priority, as global resources are decreasing while populations continue to increase. Organisations therefore need to be responsible in considering their environmental footprint, and devise business strategies that will help to preserve natural resources. In fact, many organisations are now required to comment on these strategies in their annual integrated reports.

agility and flexibility, requires a comprehensive business strategy which is aligned with the challenges of today.

Strategy may be defined as "a plan of action designed to achieve a long-term goal or overall aim". Strategy must therefore have an overall vision or goal in mind, and should outline the decisions and actions that need to be taken regarding all resources, including financial and human, as well as raw materials, products and services, markets, processes, distribution and more.



A robust strategy helps an organisation to maintain focus by providing direction to employees and acting as a benchmark against which progress and achievements can be measured. It also defines areas that are critical to success, and aids organisations in identifying whether they are on track with their strategic objectives or not. Good strategies will also highlight the changing circumstances, furthermore providing concrete solutions to address these circumstances and how the business will be required to adapt itself to such change. Strategy acts as a decision-making filter for the allocation of scarce resources within the organisation; if a product or market is not in line with the strategy, then resources should not be allocated to the project. A comprehensive strategy assists organisations with managing risks, enabling more effective anticipation of changes that could impact the organisation's ability to create and distribute wealth. Without it, an organisation is gambling with every decision, which is hardly the recipe for good governance, success and sustainability.



Creating and maintaining a sustainable organisation that preserves people and planet, while keeping pace with the speed of change and meeting demands from consumers -- who no longer need to compromise -- requires a level of agility and dynamism that simply cannot be supported by old, outdated business models.

Developing a comprehensive business strategy

The ultimate goal of an organisation is to create, capture and distribute wealth in a sustainable manner. Dealing with a rapidly changing business environment, that demands high levels of

Developing this strategy requires an intricate understanding of both the internal and external business environments, and populating the strategy demands answers to a number of questions. Who are your customers, stakeholders, competitors and regulators? What is your business model? What returns can you expect? What are your drivers for growth? Which legislation has (or will) impact your organisation and its business? How does technology impact your organisation? What controls are in place to mitigate risks and if these fail, who is accountable? All of these questions will inform the details contained within the organisation's strategy, as well as actions.

Arming business leadership with as much information as possible increases the likelihood that the correct course of action will be chosen with respect to vision, business models,

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products, services and market positioning. Pro-actively monitoring the environment will enable management to act early to changing variables, including adapting the organisation's strategic plan and risk management procedures.

Strategic leadership is essential

Given the multiple challenges facing organisations today, and considering the fact that business variables change rapidly and constantly, a strategy alone is not sufficient to ensure success. Each and every member of the organisation needs to be motivated, persuaded and managed into sharing the same vision, which requires strong and consistent strategic leadership.

Strategic leaders keep the present circumstances in mind and pay attention to short-term financial stability, while maintaining an eye on the future and what needs to be achieved in the long-term. The focus of a strategic leader is to build an organisation's resources, capabilities and core competencies in order to derive a sustained competitive advantage in the face of changing circumstances and turbulent environments. These leaders create a culture of learning that recognises the critical role of human capital in driving innovation and sustainability.

Strategic leadership is essential in articulating a clear vision for an organisation; it is also important for implementing and managing any change that may be required on the journey towards enhanced sustainability. Behaviours that manifest success should always filter from the top down, and effective strategic leadership is thus vital for ensuring day-to-day decisions support long-term growth and sustainability while maintaining profitability.



Facilitating strategy that works for your business

CGF offers an independent assessment of the current position of an organisation, along with its strengths and weaknesses, the environment within which it operates, and opportunities for growth and improvement. As a neutral party, we are able to provide an unbiased view of the circumstances facing the organisation and its business, and we can facilitate strategy development that will enable a real, sustainable competitive advantage.

Rather than offering uncontextualised information and a standard textbook-based consulting approach, our approach draws upon many years of real-world experience of managing businesses during turbulent times. This enables us to identify problems and challenges faced by both management and the board. Any solutions and advice we propose is based on tried and tested methodologies and approaches.

In order to ensure a consistent strategic vision, understanding and interpretation; we take care to document decisions and planned actions during strategic sessions and ensure that a common understanding is reached. Expectedly, this is premised on the basis of good governance, furthermore making use of a robust Corporate Governance Framework®. This pragmatic approach facilitates a robust strategy that encourages productive dialogue between the relevant stakeholders, whilst supporting the vision of the strategic leader.

About CGF

CGF was established in 2004 and the company specialises in a variety of governance, risk and compliance business solutions and services. The clientele comprises a number of the JSE listed companies and government organisations who make use of CGF's services. To find out more about CGF, our patrons and our associated services, access:

www.cgf.co.za or
www.corporategovernance.co.za or
www.governanceconnect.mobi or
call +27 (11) 4768264 / 1 / 0



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Quality in Schools

Many of our readers are parents themselves or interact often with children. We have asked our education editor, a retired headmaster, to share thoughts on how to get Quality principles and practices instilled in young people.



An attitude of gratitude Richard Hayward

For the children, the December holidays have arrived. By now all the report cards should have been opened. It's only the matric or National Senior Certificate results that still have to be issued. That long wait is almost over too.

One of the poignant scenes in a school at year-end are the Farewells. There are the delightful 'Graduation' ceremonies for the pre-schoolers who are going on to Big School and Grade One. Then there are the Grade Seven and Grade Twelve final Assemblies and Valedictions. Stiff-upper lips and tissues are sometimes needed!

A week ago I attended an emotional Thanksgiving Service for a much-beloved principal who was going on retirement. She had been principal at the school for twenty-two years. Many eloquent words were spoken about her compassion, dedication and leadership. Gifts were presented. Yet there was one gift – I thought – that was very special.

A little boy staggered forward to present the principal with two huge books that had been beautifully tied together with ribbons. He gave the principal the two books, a shy smile and a little hug. What were the books about?

The books contained the photos of all the children in every class. Every child in the school had written a personal note. This much-beloved servant leader was being told by the children how grateful they were to her and what she had meant to them.

Do children always remember to say Thank You to their teachers, sport coaches and other staff members? There are those families that encourage their children to always show appreciation. Such children are imbued with a Gratitude Attitude.

That attitude takes many forms. There are the small gifts. Some of those gifts are 'child-made' such as the cookies, muffins, a painting, a poem or even something made in the technology or woodwork class. Other gifts are the Thank You notes and the Festive Season greeting cards. Then there are the face-to-face Thank Yous when the child knocks on the teacher's classroom door, says a heart-felt few words and rushes off to enjoy the holidays.

Gratitude isn't a value only to be shown in the school. That value deserves to be expressed in any situation where a child realises that others are caring, kind and helpful.

Expressing gratitude has a 'pay back' for the giver. David Pollay, a psychologist, refers to the foundation stones of being grateful. Three of them are:

1. Gratitude reminds you of the **key people** in your life who love and support you. That helps the child build good relationships with others.

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2. Gratitude reminds you of your **strengths** – the natural talents that help you move forward and reach goals.
3. Gratitude for the things that you've already **achieved** reminds you of the road already travelled.

We are inclined to compare ourselves to others. This applies very strongly amongst children where, for example, they compare the clothes that they wear as against that of their friends. Children are very brand conscious. Think of their lively and discerning discussions around items such as the best smartphone or pair of soccer boots that they would like to be given as a gift! Such chats can lead to envy and jealousy.

To counteract possible negative emotions and feelings, there's a need for gratitude. Pieter van Jaarsveld makes these observations about those who display gratitude:

People who testify to gratitude tend to compare themselves with others less, and feel less jealous or inferior. A life of gratitude is irreconcilable with negative emotions and may reduce feelings of anger, bitterness and greed. It is almost impossible to be grateful and dominated by feelings of guilt and anger at the same time.

Gratitude isn't only about saying Thank You. Research done by Sonya Lyubomirsky (Akhtar: 77-78) has shown that the practice of gratitude builds happiness in aspects such as:

- Boosts self-esteem
- Helps you to cope with stress and adjust to difficult circumstances
- Mitigates against selfish adaptation, where we take the good things for granted
- Encourages the savouring of positive life experiences
- Promotes positive behaviour

The Festive Season is a special time to express our affection and gratitude towards others. Words of gratitude and gifts both great and small, abound. It's easy to remember to give Thank Yous to family, friends and the folk who show us daily kindness.

We can ask children whether they've forgotten anyone who's deserving of a word of appreciation. (Gentle nudging might be needed!) If so, there's the whole of the December holidays to send an email, letter, SMS or make that phone call! Encourage the children to do so. Remind them that their kindness will not only add happiness to that person's life but also to their own. It's called the 'feel good' factor!

References

Akhtar M 2012. *Positive psychology*. London: Watkins.

Van Jaarsveld P *Think your way to happiness*. Cape Town: Lux Verbi.

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B91	Introduction to Statistical Process Control (SPC)	3	R 5,160			7-9			27-29		22-24		31-2		
B79	A3 Problem Solving	2	R 4,277			10-11			30-1		25-26			3-4	
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