

# Lean Focus



## 15 Strategy Mistakes Your Company is Making Right Now

By Damon Baker



Strategic planning is an organization's process of defining its strategy, or direction, and making decisions on allocating its resources to pursue this strategy. When done well, this process also includes the mechanisms and methods used to deploy it, for example Strategy Deployment, a.k.a. Hoshin Kanri or Policy Deployment processes.

Strategic Plans at their most basic level answer two primary questions:

1. What game are we playing?
2. How do we play to win?

While it is vital for the organization to align on a strategy that creates significant competitive advantage, more important is the deliberate act of prioritizing and deciding what the organization will not do in pursuit of its' overall strategy. As you kick off your annual cycle of building the company strategy for the next 3 to 5 years, we at Lean Focus would like to share our experience of how and why the process fails so that you can prevent it from happening this year. The shelf in your office just cannot stand to bear witness to one more dusty binder of good intentions.

### **15 Strategy Mistakes Your Company is Making Right Now:**

1. Lack of commitment and involvement by the leadership team
2. Lack of ability, objectivity, and meaningful perspective
3. Making the process too complex
4. Failure to start on time or create and stick to a schedule
5. Not enough emphasis on external/internal environment and capabilities
6. Over-focusing on threats and weaknesses

7. Dogmatic use of templates and process
8. Allowing the strategic plan to be reduced to budgeting and forecasting
9. Poorly thought out action plans and problem solving on initiatives
10. Underestimating resource requirements and availability
11. Not building strategic planning into the regular business cadence
12. Incorrect assumptions or presumption errors (jumping to conclusions/solutions)
13. CEO as dictator that abdicates the process
14. Failure to monitor progress at the right cadence and frequency (weekly/bi-weekly vs. monthly or longer)
15. Not defining what winning and losing looks like in quantifiable terms

**Call to Action:** As a team, you should discuss and assess the effectiveness of your current state Strategic Planning and Deployment Process, and take action to correct it.

**Scale of Maturity: # of Strategy Mistakes in Your Process**

- 3 or less = Pat yourself on the back...you're doing pretty good.
- 4 - 6 = You are in the danger zone.
- 7 or more = Give us a call immediately at (630) 800-8519...we can help. :)

*What types of mistakes does your company fall victim to?*

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### BACKGROUND

Damon is the President & CEO of Lean Focus. For over 25 years, he has been implementing lean in consulting, operations, continuous improvement, and GM & VP-level leadership roles for such companies as Danaher, HNI, Eaton, Argo Consulting, Experian, and Winegard.

Trained by disciples of the Toyota Production System, he worked in a Shingo Prize winning facility and is a Shingo Prize Examiner. Over his career he has demonstrated hands-on leadership and facilitation of 500+ kaizen events for 50 major corporations in 16 different countries. Damon led the North American Danaher Business System Office. While at Danaher, one of his mentored operating companies was nominated Most Improved Plant, and one of his factories won Best Plant Worldwide 2 years in a row. Damon holds an MBA from St. Ambrose University and a Bachelors of Arts in Management and Marketing from Iowa Wesleyan University.

### INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

Aerospace and Defense, Automotive, Electronics, Capital Equipment, Chemicals, Protective Packaging, Residential Construction Materials, Water Quality, Dental, Test & Measurement, Sheet Metal Fabrication, Life Sciences, Medical Devices, Discrete Assembly, Oil and Gas.

### LEAN EXPERIENCE

Building/Installing Problem Solving & Kaizen Cultures, Operational Due Diligence, Acquisition Integration, Strategic Planning & Policy Deployment, Sales Force Efficiency & Effectiveness Tools, Pricing Margin Analysis, Transactional Kaizen, EBITDA focused operational improvements, Cellular Manufacturing, 6S & Visual Management, Standardized Work, Mistake Proofing (Poka Yoke), Visual Controls, Setup Reduction (SMED), Total Productive Maintenance (TPM), Daily Management Processes, Leader Standard Work, Working Capital reduction via Kanban & Pull Based Inventory tools, DSO Reduction, and Accounts Payable processes, Value Analysis & Engineering, 3P, Accelerated Product Development Tools.

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