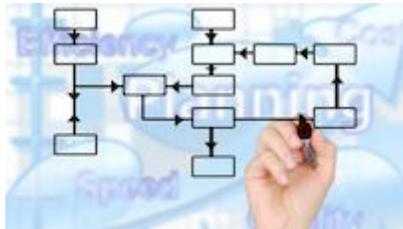




How to Lead Like a Chess Master in a Snapchat World



One of the toughest things to coach is how to think long-term when everyone around us is focused on short-term, immediate gratification.

We have video that disappears in 24 hours, so watch Periscope now. We have texts that self-destruct seconds after we read them. Thanks to live streaming, we are constantly entertained whenever we want.

So how can we develop teams of thought leaders who are thinking and planning decades in the future?

The purpose of strategic planning

The purpose of strategic planning is to set overall goals for your business or organization and then develop plans to achieve them. The most difficult part of strategic planning is to go outside of what we consider is possible now, and imagine what is possible for the future.

Strategic planning requires that leaders step away from day-to-day operations and ask deep questions about where your business is headed.

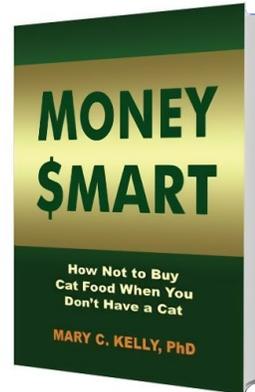
A strategic plan is not a business plan. A strategic plan focuses on long-term goals and outlines the basic actions for achieving them.

Strategic planning is risky business

Making decisions to grow a business means understanding and embracing the risks that come with potential growth. As the business

Mary's Updates

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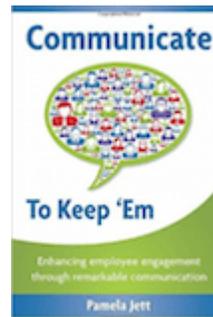


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Mary's Book of the Month



evolves, strategy formulation becomes more sophisticated.

As Peter Stark, author of [The Competent Leader](#), says, "Operations kills strategy." Strategic planning is thinking about what can be, not what we can do now. When big thinkers pitch their ideas to their teams, the operations people are the first to protest, "We can't do that."

While we can't do it now, it doesn't mean that we can't do it in the future.

Three key elements of strategic planning

Developing a strategy for growth requires a deeper understanding about who we serve in the future. What will our customers need and want? How can we meet and exceed their expectations?

Start by asking:

1. Where is our business now?

How are we operating?
What is profitable?
What are our margins?
How do we compare to our competitors?

In the assessment phase it is imperative that we are pragmatic, objective, and realistic.

2. Where do we want to take the organization?

Where do we really want to go?
If we had no constraints, what would we create?
What are our top-level objectives?
Where is our business in 5, 10, or 20 years?
What will we focus on?
What advantage will we have in the future marketplace?

This is a complex discussion that requires time and effort by the senior team.

3. What do we need to do to get there?

Then we need to think about the how.

How are we going to be the organization we want to be?
Who do we need on our team?
What skill sets do we need to develop? What changes will we need to make to achieve our strategic objectives?
What is the best way of implementing these changes?
Will we need to change the structure and financing of the business?

Many executives try to have strategic planning sessions as part of a normal workday, but real strategic planning is tough to do in short bursts.

Successful organizations tend to hold strategic retreats at locations other than the workplace to stimulate creativity and ideas.

[Communicate to Keep 'em](#) by Pamela Jett

I recently had the opportunity to talk at length with communication expert, Pamela Jett. I was intrigued about her communication book because recent statistics show less than 30% of US workers are truly engaged at work. Can better communication change employee behavior? Well, yes.

Words matter, and Pamela compiled a list of "words to use" and "words to lose." Managers and leaders may be inadvertently discouraging their people simply by the wrong word choice. The good news is that this is easy to change. The bad news is many managers are unknowingly sabotaging productivity through miscommunication.

This book is a short and easy read, and is highly recommended for people who want to make sure that they are on the right track.

Pamela is a friend of mine from the National Speakers Association, and she is also a great communications speaker.

Social Media

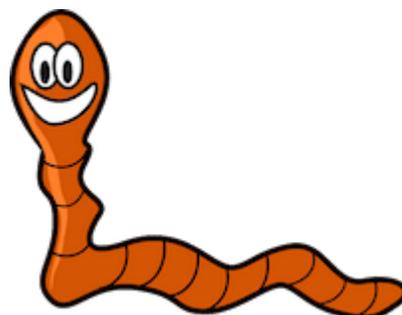
[GroupMe](#) is what college kids and are using to stay in touch with friends. Great for families too! Think emailing to groups without having to input email addresses, or group text messaging.

Connect with Mary



Pet Tip

Did you know that bot flies, as larvae on grass, can attach themselves to your dog or cat and grow happily into a worm in a lump (with a black dot or a scab on it) under your pet's skin? Bella found out that this is prevalent in areas with lots of wildlife, particularly around rabbits. We have lots of bunnies. The good news is that the entire worm is out and the vet said there is no further treatment necessary. But it was a little gross once we realized what it was. Check your pet for lumps!



Points to consider

The world is changing so fast that valid strategies for success, even from a year ago, may no longer be relevant and may need adjusting.

Brainstorming, deep thinking, and considering multiple ideas is extremely challenging. Most groups get sidetracked or distracted with conversations about past initiatives and frustrations, which wastes time. An outside coach or facilitator may be extremely valuable getting the group out of past constraints and pushing the group to stay focused and complete the agenda.

Strategic planning is uncomfortable, and the process can be emotional. Tempers may flare. Again, a skilled facilitator or coach can help the group navigate through discussions and channel that energy into breakthrough thinking and ideas.

Once the strategic planning has a solid foundation, leaders can move toward implementation and greater success when they:

Include Everyone. While the leadership of an organization may be the most involved in determining the strategic plan, all levels of the organization must understand clearly where the organization is going.

Engage the team. Provide information as quickly as possible and make everyone feel included in the process. People support what they create.

Create goals that you can measure. How long will it take? What resources are needed? What is the desired outcome? What gets measured gets accomplished.

Celebrate the wins. People need victories. Create milestones for people to make progress. Celebrate the baby steps that go well.

Please share your feedback on this article on [my blog](#).

What Does Mary Do?

1. Motivational leadership keynote and breakout speaking for conferences, convention, banquets, and events
2. Women's leadership events, particularly in the real estate, housing, insurance, medical, and financial sectors
3. Executive coaching
4. Strategic business planning

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Mary C. Kelly

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