



Strategic Planning: Creating The Future Today

by Esther Muller and Michael Williams, PhD



Strategic planning is a process and a competency. It has evolved over years. From Henry Ford, Founder of Ford Motor Company to Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple, entrepreneurs of every ilk have engaged in strategic planning to realize their vision of the future. For 21st century residential real estate entrepreneurs, strategic planning remains a core process for building a successful business. Strategic planning has been adopted and adapted to countless business applications. Today, strategic planning is a rich and integrated discipline of diverse and powerful techniques.

As a process, strategic planning requires specific knowledge, competencies, and skills in order to conceive and execute. As a competency, it requires education and practice in order to become a seasoned strategic planning practitioner.

Herein lays the challenge. Are real estate professionals seasoned strategic planners? Do they possess the competencies and skills necessary to execute strategic plans?

Let's explore these questions by examining strategy as process and competency.

Strategic Planning as Process

Strategic planning is an essential component in launching and building businesses. A strategic plan enables informed thinking and improves decision making in preparation for taking action. We suggest a five-part strategic planning model.

The five-part strategic planning model includes:

1. Mission and Objectives
2. Environmental Scanning
3. Strategy Formulation
4. Strategy Implementation; and
5. Evaluation and Control

1. Mission and Objectives

The mission describes your vision of the future. It frames the values, purpose, and direction of the business. It concretizes vision, focuses attention, and galvanizes action. The objectives define and refine the mission. They provide stakeholders with guidance for implementation.

2. Environmental Scanning

Sales agents must understand their internal and external business environments. Internally, agents must identify key strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats associated with their business strategy. Externally, knowing the political, environmental, social, and technological environmental dynamics can enable or

disable business building.

3. Strategy Formulation

Formulating strategy is an integrative process. It includes analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating data culled from the prior steps. Ideally, it is a collaborative effort engaging key stakeholders in a focused activity of writing a written strategic plan.

4. Strategy Implementation

Implementing strategy is a multi-phase process. It requires resources and management to ensure strategies are operationalized and executed. All stakeholders must understand the purpose of and expected outcomes from strategy implementation.

5. Evaluation and Control

Evaluating the outcomes enables revision and control. The goal is to measure progress toward goal achievement.

Strategic planning as process is the cornerstone of building a successful and sustainable residential real estate practice. Tresa Hall, Executive Vice President and Director of Sales of The Corcoran Group and recipient of the Henry Forster Award, states "Strategic planning is an essential business building practice. Without strategic planning, business direction, process and measurement are undefined, in turn difficult to attain."

Strategic Planning As Competency

Strategic planning as competency is both art and science. As a process it provides models for planning and implementing business activities. As competency, it requires education and practice. Strategic planning is a learned skill. Therefore, continued professional development is essential. Learn strategic planning as a discipline. With practice, it can become a competency.

Fortunately, many agents are seasoned strategic planners. However, becoming a planning expert requires disciplined application and review. So, learn and practice strategic planning in order to build your business.

Strategic Planning As Future

The 6th century B.C. Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu is credited with writing "Can you imagine what I would do if I could do all I can?" Are you doing "all you can" to build your knowledge of and skills with strategic planning? If not, get started creating your business future today. ■

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