

The Power of Strategic Commitment

by Gary Tomlinson

“Learning from the school of hard knocks can be very informing, but often the tuition is too high! We should learn from other people’s experiences.” The purpose of this column is to share great business wisdom from the experiences of authors like Jim Collins, Michael Gerber, Frank McNair, Michael LeBoeuf, Ron Willingham, Randy Pennington and others. Because when you combine great business education with your own business experiences the outcome you’ll receive is far greater than the sum of its parts.

The wisdom of Leibner’s, Mader’s and Weiss’s new book; *The Power of Strategic Commitment* has been chosen to share with you this week. “The attainment of strategic goals is the lifeblood of any organization. Whether for-profit, nonprofit, local, global, large, small, service or manufacturing, entities will drift, decline and die if they aren’t in pursuit of a managed, intelligent future.”

“Ideally, every employee should be acting in concert with that future – the strategic goals of the organization. The larger the organization, the more important it is because there is more chance of people going astray. Think of an athletic team (football, soccer) where a third of the players aren’t executing on the plays called to score. That’s why *commitment* – the innate willingness of people to follow and contribute – always trumps *compliance* – the forced adherence to plans created through manipulation, punishment and coercion.”

Leibner, Mader and Weiss believe that in most business issues, the level of commitment you can expect from your employees will be determined by what’s projected from the top. They go on to say that “the reason many well-designed initiatives end up falling short or failing outright is that employees sense immediately if senior management does or does not have the resources, structures and sheer guts to follow through on all grand visions they generated at the last strategic planning session.” Typically, senior management goes offsite for a strategic planning event, agree on a bunch of priorities for the year, then go back to work and do what they were going to do anyway. This lack of resolve then permeates every level, department and individual in their workplace.

When you’re taking your company to the next level, you constantly strive for that magical combination of top talent, superior leadership, critical resources and canny strategy. But those elements, either separately or in combination, will never achieve their ultimate value without commitment. Leibner, Mader and Weiss strongly believe that strategic commitment is real, it’s measurable, and, yes, you can build it.

A key point in their book is that getting people behind the strategy doesn’t begin and end with perfecting its content. They believe senior leadership must also focus on the context of the strategy. “With *The Power of Strategic Commitment*, you’ll not only learn how to create and communicate initiatives that have inherent value (Content), you’ll also learn

how to show and build belief in the lasting importance of those initiatives to both the organization and each employee (Context).”

“*The Power of Strategic Commitment* lays out a blueprint for moving beyond compliance that is the norm at all too many companies, toward that magical point where every initiative is not only accepted but supported – even embraced – by every employee at every level.” Their book not only shows you what that level of engagement looks like, it also gives you the tools and proven methodologies to achieve it, measure it, track it and maintain it. “No matter how well they are planned, strategic initiatives large and small are doomed to fail if the people charged with executing them don’t believe in them. Creating and sustaining that sort of buy-in may seem like a tall order, but it’s imperative if you want to stay ahead of your competition. And it starts with leadership and management – **it starts with you!**”

To learn more about *The Power of Strategic Commitment* and/or to purchase a copy go to www.strategiccommitment.com. This is an incredible book, filled with practical tools, proven methods and countless examples. It should be on every senior leaders “must-read-list.”

Gary Tomlinson is a strexecutionist specializing in strategy execution management. He works with senior leaders to help them clarify, deploy and achieve their organizational initiatives by establishing execution management as a core competency. Gary uses a unique and dynamic methodology that is part process, part software and part roadmap that enables his clients to close the gap between planning and implementation. You can engage Gary at gary@gary-tomlinson.com or visit his website at www.gary-tomlinson.com