



Long-Term Business Success Requires Strategic and Operational Balance

Successfully companies — those who achieve market superiority — have a solid handle on four critical elements of their business.

By Mac McIntire

I've often marveled at how some companies stay in business in spite of themselves. They operate with no apparent business strategy or marketing plan. Their operating systems are haphazard at best, and they churn through employees as if there is an unlimited supply of talent. It seems many business managers operate by the seat of their pants; yet they are able to stay in business. The question is, for how long?

One of the key elements that separate competitively successful companies from mediocre ones is a *balanced focus* in four critical areas. Even small businesses can achieve market superiority by assessing their strengths and weaknesses in these four focal areas.

Areas of Focus

Successful businesses hone their operational practices to focus both on the *future strategic direction* of the company and the current *operational needs* of the enterprise. They also delicately balance the fine line between the hard, *process issues* of the organization and the soft, *people issues* affecting their customers and employees. Everything within the company is finely tuned with pinpoint precision to achieve the performance results they want.

Your company's market superiority is contingent upon how well you align, balance and execute all four focal areas depicted in the graphic on this page.

If your company is too future-oriented, you may neglect the day-to-day details of your business. On the other hand, if your nose is always to the grindstone, you may miss potential opportunities that pass by while you are singularly focused internally on your operations instead of externally on the conditions of the market.

Likewise, if you are too focused

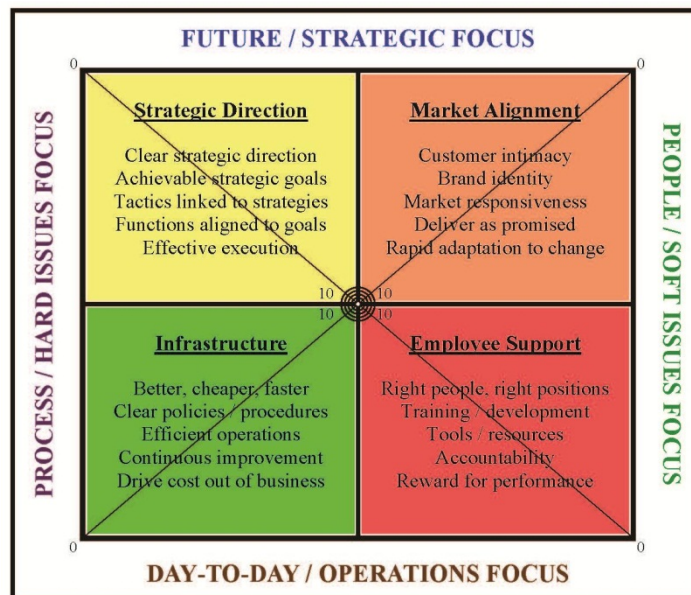
area within the enterprise is focused and aligned to achieve the company's strategic objectives. Most important, they properly execute their strategic plan to ensure they achieve those objectives.

Successful companies know their market. They maintain intimate relationships with their customers and ensure the products and services they deliver are what the customers want. They deliver what they promise and adapt quickly to changes in the market. They recognize the equity of their brand is contingent on how well they meet their customers' needs.

Successful businesses constantly monitor their policies, procedures, processes, practices and systems to discover ways to produce and deliver their products and services better, cheaper and faster. They eliminate any traditional or bureaucratic procedures that get in the way of

efficiently serving their customers. They constantly seek ways to optimize, minimize or alter their processes to drive cost out of the business. They ensure their operational practices achieve their strategic objectives.

Finally, the best companies hire the right people for the right jobs. They train their managers and employees properly. They provide their workforce with the information, tools, resources and incentives needed to perform well. They hold people accountable and



on your policies and procedures, you may damage your relationship with your customers or employees. On the other hand, if you are too touchy-feely with your employees, you could lose the procedural discipline needed to efficiently and effectively deliver your products and services.

Pinpointed Balance

The best run companies have a clear strategic direction. They set achievable goals and align their tactical plans to accomplish them. They make sure every functional

recognize and reward people for their performance. They create a company culture that extracts the best from their people and engages them in delivering high quality products and services.

Simply put, the best business managers manage the business. They remain focused on the things that matter most. They intricately balance with pinpoint precision the four critical components of their business. And *Innovative Management Group* helps them do it.

How We Can Help

For over 22 years Innovative Management Group has been helping companies design, develop and align everything within their organization to achieve significant competitive advantage. We have developed *patented*, proven techniques in each of the four focal areas identified in this article. Our systematic organizational development and change management processes can help your company achieve the necessary operational balance to guarantee long-term profitability and growth.

We help you define your strategic direction. We show you how to target your products and services for specific customer segments. We assist you in developing policies, procedures, processes, practices and systems to achieve the business results you want. We also help you implement the human resource tactics that will ensure you have the right people in the right place at the right time doing the right things for the right reasons.

In short, we help you stay focused. We make sure your company is successful at every level and in every element of your business! §

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