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**Strategic Planning
For Success: Aligning
People, Performance,
and Payoffs**

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Strategic Planning for Success: Aligning People, Performance, and Payoffs

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This book is written by four authors working in the human performance improvement tradition that is strongly associated with the International Society for Performance and Instruction (ISPI). Thus, it doesn't present strategic planning as a business school would present it, or even as someone with a background in business process change might do it. Instead, strategic planning is presented by a team that is focused on aligning people and processes to achieve strategic change. This is a book for line managers and supervisors who are required to define strategies for specific process and then assure that actual employees will implement those processes.

One of the important insights developed by ISPI in the Seventies and Eighties was that the analysis of human performance problems required that the analyst make very clear distinctions between instructional, environmental, and motivational problems, and that, further, he or she distinguish between problems that require training and those where performance should be guided by "job aids." This systematic approach to analyzing human performance is usually referred to as Human Performance Technology (HPT).

Without going into what can be a long discussion, let's focus on the distinction between training and the use of guidance. Training is appropriate when the performer must work from memory. It assumes that the performance situation presents the performer with a task which the person must accomplish without reference to manuals, checklists, or other guidance devices. Some jobs required memorized responses because things occur very quickly, or because customers expect the person to seem to knowledgeable. Most tasks don't require training, or, more precisely, they require that the performer learn to use reference materials and job aids. This has resulted in a revolution in how smart companies approach human performance change. Training classes are expensive. Guidance materials are much less expensive, and normally guarantee more accurate performance. Smart companies, using HPT, have sharply reduced training expenses while simultaneously improving how employees perform on the job. Increasingly, today, the job aid of choice is the computer, which can guide employees in the performance of tasks. This background is important, because the authors of *Strategic Planning for Success* are very much in the ISPI/HPT tradition, and have created a book that is, in effect, a job aid, coupled with the minimal instruction needed to use the various aids. The book contains some theoretical discussion, but more importantly, it punctuates each theoretical discussion with a series of checklists and worksheets that the reader can use to analyze his or her particular problem.



That brings us to the second key point. Too many discussions of strategy assume that strategy is something done by an executive committee. In reality, most large companies have only very vague strategies. Strategy doesn't get very concrete till you work down to the divisional level. And even divisions often have only general strategies, and depend upon process-focused groups planning the division's supply chain, it's new product development, and its sales and marketing efforts, to come up with specific strategies. In other words, corporate managers often provide general direction, and then leave it to teams of middle managers to design specific strategies for each of the organization's major business processes. If you attend a Supply Chain Council workshop, you devote several hours to a discussion of the different types of supply chain strategies a company could adopt and why you might choose one over another. Thus, middle managers often find themselves working on strategic issues. And that's exactly where *Strategic Planning for Success* comes into its own.

This isn't a book for an MBA who is interested in a high-level overview of organizational or competitive strategy issues. This is a book for line and middle managers who have to figure out how to scale their organization's strategy to fit their specific needs.

This book takes a manager by the hand and walks him or her right through the issues they need to consider, providing all the information, checklists and worksheets needed along the way to assure they can document the path they follow.

The book doesn't spend much time with technologies and IT and it isn't a book for someone who has to choose among technical options. It is a book for someone who manages people and wants help with identifying a good strategy and figuring out how to sell it to the people who are going to have to implement it.

The book includes a CD with PowerPoint presentations for each chapter, as well as additional job aids, case studies and exercises. If you need to give a workshop or teach a class on strategic analysis or change management, this book will provide you with almost everything you need to present it.

This book makes strategic planning and the process of aligning people around strategic goals as straight forward as it can be, while still providing all the support needed to assure it gets done right. Most line managers would benefit from studying this book. Every human resources professional who needs to support strategic planning will want to study this book. Smart ones will use it to design and teach strategy courses to their managers