

Leading Strategically

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Overview

Daily demands make leading strategically seem a luxury, but it is essential work at the executive level. Without it, organizations face the future unprepared. This is NOT, however, a course on “strategic planning.” Planning has utility, but long, detailed plans are often paper exercises that founder against the rocks of changing priorities and events. We focus instead on thinking and acting strategically – a way of leading that allows you to have an end goal in mind but adapt your leadership as problems – and opportunities - arise.

Secretary of State George C. Marshall, who was once called the world’s “first global strategist,” launched the Marshall Plan for the recovery of Europe at the end of World War II. This was a four-year goal that addressed the potential for mass starvation and the loss of Europe to communism. It required great foresight and skillful follow-through, with constant adjustment to “events on the ground.” Marshall led strategically.

President Kennedy had to achieve the goal of removing offensive nuclear weapons from Cuba without going to war or setting a precedent of caving in to Soviet threats. Nelson Mandela, on becoming president of South Africa, had to unify a nation divided by apartheid. How did these leaders think and act to address these strategic goals? How did they navigate through repeated crises, political challenges, and amidst the conflicting expectations of stakeholders? How do government executives today spot emerging forces and trends, incorporate them into their thinking about the organization’s strategy, and gain support to move forward?

The purposes of this course are to examine how historical and contemporary leaders have approached the tasks of leading strategically and to enable participants to adapt their ideas and techniques to their own leadership challenges.

Objectives

By the end of this course, you will have increased your ability to:

1. Describe the importance of leading strategically and the actions that help and hinder it;
2. Think strategically, including the implications of current and potential actions, and incorporate such knowledge into their leadership;
3. Exercise sound judgment, including other perspectives, in making strategic decisions;
4. Manage the organizational and political context for strategic leadership;
5. Collaborate across organizational boundaries to achieve strategic change; and
6. Exercise power and influence even if you lack the positional authority to control events.

Instructional Approach

This course draws on case studies of both strategic successes and failure and draw lessons from both. We also use video clips and current research as well as participants’ experiences in strategic leadership. Participants will apply course concepts/tools to their own strategic leadership efforts.

Leadership Competencies Addressed: Decisiveness, Entrepreneurship, External Awareness, Flexibility, Influencing/Negotiating, Partnering, Political Savvy, Strategic Thinking, Vision.

Course Outline

Session 1: Leading Strategically: Introduction and Overview (Terry, Russ, John)

- Opening and Overview
 - Faculty Introductions, Participant Expectations, Course Overview
 - Why Does Leading Strategically Matter?
- Case Study: The Bay of Pigs and Leading Strategically: Lessons Learned
- A Framework for Leading Strategically
- Video Case: *13 Days* and The Cuban Missile Crisis
- Judgment and Strategic Decision Making

Session 2: Creating a Strategic Goal (Terry)

- Video Case Continued: *13 Days* - Foresight, Prediction, and Thinking in Possibilities
- The STEEP Model and Strategic Foresight Work: A Group Exercise
- Strategy and Its Implications - The Implications Wheel: Exercise
- Identifying a Strategic Goal
 - Video Case: *Invictus* (Mandela fights for a Unified South Africa)
 - Strategy as Challenge: The Characteristics of a Good Strategic Goal

Session 3: Building Political Legitimacy and Support (Terry)

- Case Study: Launching the Marshall Plan
- Stakeholder Analysis: A Model and Individual Application
- Communicating a Strategic Goal
 - Video Case: Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream"
 - The SUCCESS Model for Compelling Communication

Session 4: Co-Leadership and Social Power (John, Terry)

- The Difference Between Social and Authoritative Power
 - Types of Social Power and a Social Power Assessment
- Video Case: *13 Days* and Power Partnerships
 - Power Partnership Model and Self-Assessment

Session 5: Leading Strategically Through Collaboration and Core Competence (Russ, Terry)

- Video Case: *13 Days*: "We have only 30 hours left" from "13 Days;"
- The WIIFM Principle and Collaboration
- Why Collaboration is Often Difficult
 - Leading Across Boundaries: A 6-Part Framework
- Case Study: The FBI's National Academy
 - Organizational Core Competences: What They Are and Why They are Powerful
 - Exercise: Identify Your Organization's Core Competencies

Learning Approaches

Case studies/case study discussion	35%
Small group exercises	35%
Readings and discussion	20%
Videos	10%