

Savvy Strategy and Exceptional Execution

LED BY:

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A successful strategy means you are winning the customers you aim to serve and creating a sustainable competitive advantage. If you're achieving your goals, your strategy is on track.

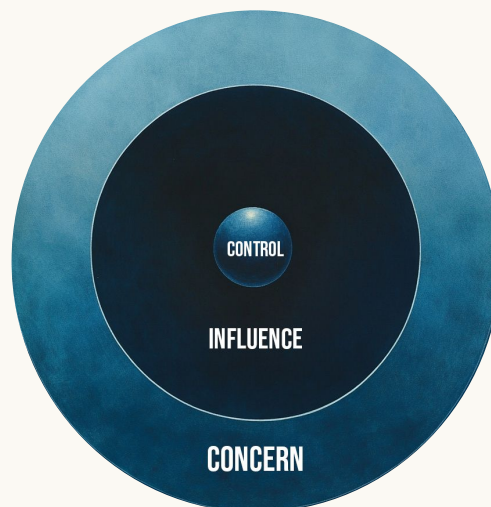
Yet, no strategy can remain stable in a world that is constantly evolving. Gaps between your intent and your results will inevitably appear, signalling that it is time to reassess your choices.

"We all have strategies, whether formal or not. The strategies of our companies, business units, and functions are what we do, not what we say."
- AG Lafley

01 MANAGING THE STRATEGY

Narrow your focus

To borrow from Stephen Covey's framework, any situation involves concentric circles of concern, influence, and control. In the current business environment, the circle of concern is expanding while the circle of control shrinks.



CASE STUDY

Focus

At P&G, AG Lafley delegated the quarterly earnings calls to the CFO and only attended the annual fiscal year end company call and the annual CAGNY consumer products' industry conference.

By doing so, he saved at least a full month each year to focus on higher-value activities.

He applied the same approach to creative and brand reviews, encouraging the business units to lead these meeting. By doing so, he saved another month to reinvest in areas where his comparative advantage was more likely to result in a competitive advantage for the company.

Acknowledge concerns, and check whether there are any of significance, but do not get consumed or distracted by them. Be intentional about the few things you can control. Focus most of your energy on what you can effectively influence to drive meaningful change.

Create certainty where possible

Uncertainty is inevitable—most of what you do involves betting on probabilities, not certainties. Help your teams see that while external uncertainties exist, having clear goals and choiceful strategies provides a foundation for navigating them.

“Certainty on the inside helps you face uncertainty on the outside.”

- AG Lafley

Be clear about your goals, and the choices of both where to play and how to win. Invest in your core competencies. A less political and less chaotic organization will do better in a volatile world.

“Everything we do carries risk. That is business innovation”

- AG Lafley

CASE STUDY

Be transparent

When leading business units, AG Lafley had the entire leadership team complete the Myers-Briggs assessment.

It helped to understand each other better and improve collaboration.

02 MANAGING YOURSELF

Choose what not to do

If what you are doing does not drive results or can be done by somebody else in your team, then it is not advancing the company's competitive advantage. Be disciplined and focused about the best use of your energy, time, and effort.

“The fundamental essence of strategy is choice.”

- AG Lafley

Empower your team to leverage their strengths. Remove yourself from anything where they can deliver the same results as you.

By leveraging your comparative advantage, you complement your business unit's strengths, allowing the entire organization to excel.

Do what only you can do

The unique strength of a senior leader will often lie in connecting external opportunities with internal capabilities. For example, in innovation, allow the product team to do the product development and focus your time on linking their efforts with external partners.

Your role is to enable your team, business units, and functions to maximize their comparative advantages.

Boost your personal stamina

Know when you are at your best and structure your work around those high-energy periods. Understand your strengths in various settings—when you should work alone, in pairs, or with a team—and make deliberate choices about how to use your energy most effectively.

“Manage your energy, not your time.”

- AG Lafley

CASE STUDY

Compete externally

At P&G, AG Lafley grew tired of business units boasting about outperforming each other.

He shifted the focus to external benchmarks and fostered a culture of humility and cooperation.

When the teams compared themselves to the best in their industries, they began to focus on real growth.

CASE STUDY

Lead with values

At P&G AG Lafley emphasized integrity and trust, ownership and leadership, passion for serving the customer, and winning.

Their values were part of the glue that held P&G together across its diversity of businesses and products.

03 MANAGING OTHERS

Align all teams to the strategy

Tie the work of business units to the strategic objectives. Make sure teams understand the impact they have on your customers and the growth of the company. Disengaged teams will work towards their own goals.

Invest in developing your emotional intelligence (EQ). On one hand, it deepens your self-awareness, self-control, and self-management. On the other, it enhances your ability to build constructive, creative, and productive relationships with your customers and suppliers, your partners and stakeholders, and your business and functional teams.

Your example will set the tone for the company culture. Most people are comfortable working vertically yet are not as willing or as well equipped to collaborate horizontally or diagonally.

Attract and inspire

Large companies face increasing pressure from freelancers, non-profits, and startups to attract top talent.

Empower talent by engaging people through the values they share with your company and its purpose. Enable them to work towards the mission in a way that is challenging and fun.

“I like focus and unleash way better than command and control. I like transparency better than transactions.”

- AG Lafley

Foster strong personal connections. People are motivated to work with you, and with their teammates, more than they are for the company, the business unit, the function, or the brand, especially when they share the values and a motivating mission.

THE FOUR AGREEMENTS

Don Miguel Ruiz

1. Be impeccable with your word.
2. Don't take anything personally.
3. Don't make assumptions.
4. Always do your best.

04 MANAGING A NEW POSITION

Stay curious

When stepping into a new role, set your assumptions aside, stay open-minded, and get connected. Figure out who you can learn from.

Be patient. Request at least 30 days, and ideally 60 to 100 days, to understand the organization's environment and culture, as well as what's working and what's not. Rushing through this period leads to poor decision-making based on incomplete information.

"Get into learning mode and balance your EQ with your IQ."

- AG Lafley



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