

Natural born leaders

Jean-Luc Ambrosi | 04 February, 2019 10:29 | 0 Comments |  |  | [Share this post](#) |

Many business and marketing managers progressing to leadership positions face evolving their focus from operational matters to strategic decision making and planning.

We all know that people excelling at execution will not always succeed at strategy building or strategic decision making. So it begs the question: Can you learn to be a strategist or is it a skill you are born with?

Many research papers argue a lack of strategic thinking by senior managers is often a major shortcoming in organisations. With all the tools, training and methods available to managers today, this points to the fact that while the strategic process can be learned, the practice of strategy requires a natural incline to really succeed at it.

Of course, not all strategy makers are born the same, and there are many forms of strategy building. I am referring to the capacity to see forward, build visions and roadmaps. It is also important to differentiate strategic thinking from strategic planning, the latter being correlated to analytics decision based and organising rather than visioning.

And this is often what is really required from managers. While great visionaries can be amazing leaders, they are the exception rather than the norm.

Unfortunately, people in organisations hold the belief strategic thinking sits above execution in some form of 'royal' hierarchy. This is the core of the issue: Managers want to be perceived as being 'strategic thinkers' because of the belief that true leaders are 'strategic', therefore equating leadership and strategy.

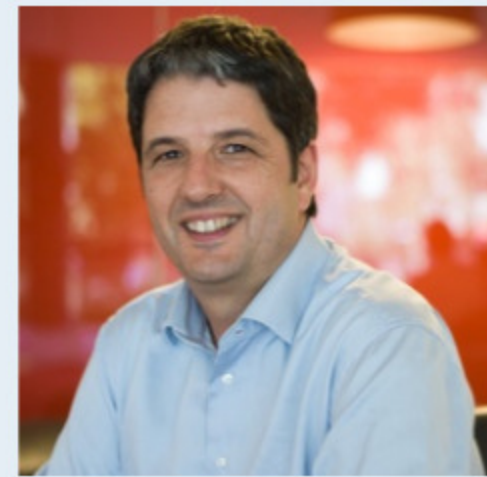
These are different skill sets and shouldn't be confused. Leading people and creating visions are vastly different and originate from different parts of the cortex.

Take a deep look at your experience with leadership teams and you will find most leaders are not strategic thinkers; their core skills lie in driving people, driving execution and only sometimes in strategy. So the correlation between strategy and leadership falls short.

So when managers want to climb the corporate ladder they may find that they can be successful if they support strategy as opposed to dictating it. Where they need to use their skills is in translating strategies into corporate visions and implementation paths.

What's the lesson here? If strategy is not your forte, don't fake it. Instead, leverage your skills to enhance, plan and lead its successful accomplishment, keeping in mind that brilliant strategies often fail due to poor execution.

Tags: [marketing careers](#), [CMO role](#), [leadership](#)



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