

# 7<sup>7</sup> Strategic Management: A Holistic Executive Perspective

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Knowing self, insight and effectiveness are important in life, especially to the psychological health, growth and development of an ethical executive. The philosophy presented in 7<sup>7</sup> (Seven to the Seventh Power) Strategic Management is more holistic than most traditional business perspectives. An executive's needs, understandings and competencies include seven areas: seven functions of management, seven goals of excellence, seven effective habits for success, seven character building virtues, seven deadly sins, seven insights for integrity and seven states of wisdom. The idea of 7<sup>7</sup> Strategic Management is rooted in servant leadership, which uses effective moral stewardship, cooperation, synergy, and foresight to ethically maximize shareholder value for all.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Whether it is Dirty Harry's counsel "A man's got to know his limitations," or the ancient Greek axiom "Know thyself," the advice is well worth heeding. Top corporate executives at Enron, ImClone, WorldCom, and, of course, Martha Stewart should have listened more carefully to this advice. Effective, psychologically fit managers know that truth's reality provides the only knowledge required to achieve self-actualization and real success. Part of the wisdom required to be an enlightened manager who is worthy of trust and respect comes in sevens. This insight is certainly not all one needs to know about ethical managerial psychology and effectiveness, but it is a beginning. Life's lessons in management and enlightenment consist of seven areas composed of seven elements each: seven functions, seven goals, seven habits, seven virtues, seven sins, seven insights and seven states.

Genuine success requires effective ethical stewardship based on efficient habit that directs timely knowledge, skills and abilities with foresight. The complete executive uses seven principles of management for effectiveness, pursues constantly seven fundamental goals, develops the character of seven virtues, avoids seven deadly sins, practices seven habits for success and grows as a human being. This manuscript, "7<sup>7</sup> (Seven to the Seventh Power) Strategic Management," presents these seven vital categories and notes the seven components in each grouping.

Afterwards, a conclusion is drawn. Let us begin by reviewing what executives do, or the seven functions of management.

### **MANAGEMENT'S SEVEN FUNCTIONS**

An able executive uses seven management principles, or functions. The functions are planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting. How many of these principles do you apply daily as an executive? The indispensable seven functions are:

Planning - Planning is nothing more than decision-making for the future.

Organizing - Organizing is forming unity, or a functioning whole, through structure.

Staffing - The HRM function, it includes finding, training and retaining the best.

Directing - Using knowledge to focus efforts to get needed results through employees.

Coordinating - Synergistic unity of purpose with communication to ensure teamwork.

Reporting - Monitoring or measurements used for conclusions, recommendations.

Budgeting - The allocation of financial, physical, informational and human resources.

To enhance the understanding of the importance of these functions, the seven primary management goals are presented next.

### **MANAGEMENT'S SEVEN GOALS**

A skilled executive strives to accomplish these seven goals to achieve excellence. The seven-benchmark goals are:

1. Vision - Vision is a realistic dream organizations seek to accomplish and materialize.
2. Mission - Mission is an organization's raison d'être, its purpose, or the reason it exists.
3. Objectives - Objectives are measurable end-states organizations work to attain over time.
4. Effectiveness - Effectiveness is doing the right (or correct) things.
5. Efficiency - Efficiency is doing things right (or correctly).
6. Adding value - to customers', employees' and stakeholders' lives through sound management puts value-added experiences into all stakeholders' lives.
7. Quality - gained through continuous improvement and innovation. Timely consistent quality is the best advertisement for any organization, it's your reputation. To improve one's ability to manage successfully, one practices the seven habits of effective people outlined by Stephen Covey. His conceptual habits are uncomplicated and a common sense way to creatively proceed into the future.

### **SEVEN HABITS FOR SUCCESS**

A pragmatic executive grows daily as a practitioner. To be successful one needs to develop effective habits. Covey (1989) quotes Aristotle, "We are what we repeatedly do. Ethical excellence, then, is not an act, but a sincere habit." There are seven habits of effectiveness successful people use: pro-activism, beginning with the end in mind, putting first things first, thinking win-win, seeking to understand before expecting understanding, synergism and sharpening the saw. Practicing these seven habits supports how an executive does what s/he is suppose to do, becomes what s/he needs to become, and avoids what s/he needs to avoid. How many of these habits do you have? Covey's seven habits of highly effective people:

1. "Be Proactive, or the Principles of Personal Vision,
2. Begin with the end in mind, or the Principles of Personal Leadership,
3. Put first things first, or the Principles of Personal Management,
4. Think Win-Win, or the Principles of Interpersonal Leadership,
5. Seek first to understand, then to be understood, or the Principles of Empathic Communication,
6. Synergize, or the Principle of Creative Cooperation, [and]
7. Sharpen the saw, or the Principles of Balanced Self-Renewal."

To complete the seven habits, one adheres to life's seven principal virtues.

### **THE SEVEN CARDINAL VIRTUES**

A knowledgeable executive cherishes seven virtues to develop into who s/he needs to become. The seven cardinal virtues are love, humility, kindness/hope, zeal, generosity, faith/temperance, and self-control. How many of these virtues have you cultivated? The seven virtues of the spirit are:

Love  
Humility  
Kindness/Hope  
Zeal  
Generosity  
Faith/Temperance  
Self-control

To provide contrast to these virtues, the temptations of the seven deadly sins follow.

### **THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS**

An intelligent executive avoids these seven sins to protect insight, perspective, character, and reputation. The seven deadly sins are envy, pride, anger/wrath, slothfulness, avarice/greed, gluttony and lust. How many of these sins have you avoided? The seven sins:

Envy  
Pride  
Anger/Wrath  
Slothfulness  
Avarice/Greed  
Gluttony  
Lust

To counter these seven fatal sins, the ethical insight needed to improve character and integrity follows.

### **THE SEVEN INSIGHTS**

A prudent executive lives the insight found in seven principles of integrity that expand one's basic character. How many of these qualities have you developed? The traits are:

Truth  
Honesty  
Fairness  
Openness  
Industriousness  
Dependability  
Perseverance

Finally, using these insights as a philosophical foundation, this paper now presents its psychological superstructure, the seven states of wisdom.

### **THE SEVEN STATES OF WISDOM**

A maturing executive is constantly developing psychologically as a human being by increasing awareness. The following wisdom is from the Sanskrit sutras, "The seven states of wisdom are:

knowing that which has to be known  
discarding that which has to be discarded  
attaining that which has to be attained  
doing that which has to be done  
winning the goal that has to be won  
freeing the intelligence from the pull of [*limitations, and*]  
achieving emancipation of the soul so that it shines in its own light."

Any interpretation would detract from the unpretentious eloquence of these yogic verses. Next, conclusions are drawn on the perspectives presented.

### **CONCLUSION**

The conclusion appears rather simple: The septenarius advice is priceless. Practicing 7<sup>z</sup> (Seven to the Seventh Power) Management instructs executives on what to do and how to do it, gives essential goals and successful habits, reveals what to become and what to avoid, imparts insight to build character, and helps maintain psychological balance and ethical development. Now it is your turn to decide the value, worth and insight of 7<sup>z</sup> Strategic Management.

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