

Crafting strategy for organizations

[Business](#), [Strategy](#)



Strategic management is the set of managerial decisions and actions that determines the long-run performance of an organization. It is a process of identifying an organization's goals. It involves making of policies and plans to achieve the goals and budgeting resources for the plan's implementation. It also focuses on using the plans created as an outline for the daily activities. It is the top level of managerial activity, typically executed by the organization's head and executive team. Importantly, it gives overall direction to the whole enterprise.

In Henry Mintzberg's (1987) article "Crafting Strategy", strategy creation and implementation are interdependent. He compares the art of strategy making to pottery, and managers to potters sitting at a wheel molding the clay and letting the shape of the object evolve in their hands. As Mintzberg explains, "In my metaphor, managers are craftsmen and strategy is their clay" (p. 66). This way, strategy is crafted not by managers or consulting experts alone but by individuals who know the organization in a deep and intimate way.

Mintzberg explains that the product of this is more likely to resemble a pattern, to emerge from disorderly debate than to be formulated from rational steps. He also points out that, "Like potters at the wheel, organizations must make sense of the past if they hope to manage the future. [...]. Thus crafting strategy, like managing craft, requires a natural synthesis of the future, present, and past" (p. 75). I have to agree with the points raised by Mintzberg.

Strategy, indeed, materializes through the relationship of structured planning and informal responses. Strategy creation and implementation are

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interdependent. Formal planning alone is not the best way for managers to develop strategy since strategies are not always deliberate. They could also emerge over time as organizations innovate and respond to their markets and by seeing patterns take shape in their environments. Over time, an organization's product/s may change to reflect both the demands of the markets and the organization's own evolving style.

It is also true that top level managers should also listen to the people below them, especially those who are directly in touch with the customers since they are the ones who get first-hand feedbacks from clients regarding the products. It is also important to synthesize the past, present, and future experiences of an organization to find the most effective strategy for an organization. Knowing the mistakes and accomplishments of the past, the processes used, and the effectiveness of the knowledge in present time would greatly help an organization in creating a more effective strategy in the future.

A practical application of Mintzberg's point could be seen in numerous organizations where salespersons are considered as merely people who need to sell the products and exceed the sales quota. The salespersons are normally not included in strategic planning meetings of executives. However, as Mintzberg suggested, it is important to integrate these people into strategy planning and ask their opinion of the products that they sell when crafting strategy.

Normally, when a salesperson makes modifications of the product that he is selling, he could get a warning or termination for not following the standardized process. In other cases, he could be asked to fill up a Product

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Modification Input Solicitation form that has to go through product development's, strategic planning's, and other committees' review. In short, everything has to be done in a formal way. But as Mintzberg explains, formal planning is not always the answer to crafting strategy.

It is important to hear the opinions of the people who know the organization's clients best --- the salespeople. Successful strategies and innovations that evolve and cash in on unexpected problems or opportunities are part of a dynamic, organization learning process. Experiences, expertise, ideas, market and customer shifts, feedback, input and the like shape the emerging strategies and point the way to innovation pathways. Reference Mintzberg, H. (1987). Crafting Strategy. HarvardBusiness Review, 65 (4), 66-75.