

How to Get Strategy on the Agenda!

- *Best practices for putting strategy on the menu in your organisation.*

By Lars Østerby, consultant

Putting strategy on the agenda, whether it involves developing, implementing, or following up, can be extremely challenging when we must simultaneously juggle everyday tasks and contend with the daily "crocodile wrestling".

In this article, we'll explore best practices I have observed for getting strategy on the agenda at all levels of your organization. Additionally, we'll introduce a simple yet powerful tool to help achieve this. But first, let's address one of the most common pitfalls.

Break free from isolated follow up workshops

While well-intentioned, the tradition of annual or semi-annual strategy workshops where we follow up on the strategy often relegates strategy discussions to isolated events. Employees and managers tend to focus on strategy only in the days leading up to these gatherings, leaving it largely untouched in day-to-day operations. And when the session is over employees (and sometimes also managers) feel relieved as they can now return to their "real work".

Related to the above is the lack of continuity. Strategies that lack ongoing attention and reinforcement quickly lose relevance. When strategy discussions are confined to sporadic meetings or workshops, they often fail to be part of daily work life, resulting in disengagement and detachment.

I will argue that the worst practice is infrequently prioritizing strategy on the agenda, despite addressing it with depth and thoroughness *when* it does occur.

Think Small – Act Frequently

Instead of occasional deep dives, integrating strategy into daily discussions and meetings, establishing a high frequency, rhythm, and routines nurtures a culture of continuous alignment.

Identify specific forums within your organization, ranging from executive meetings to team huddles, and consistently include strategy as a regular agenda item. By integrating strategy discussions into routine interactions, you reinforce its significance and relevance. Aim to establish a consistent cadence.

Embrace Storytelling – The "Strategy Share"

Move away from mundane PowerPoint presentations and embrace the art of storytelling. Encourage managers and employees to share brief success stories or challenges related to the strategy implementation. This humanizes the process and fosters genuine engagement.

When individuals emotionally connect with the strategy, they are more likely to internalize its importance and actively contribute to its realization. For example, adopting the practice of starting all meetings with a brief "strategy-sharing" from an employee and rotating the responsibility among team members each time can be beneficial. This should not exceed five minutes at the beginning of a meeting or session.

Less is More – also when it comes to strategy execution

Avoid overwhelming teams with exhaustive strategy updates. Instead, focus on bite-sized, actionable insights that resonate with daily tasks. By distilling complex concepts into digestible nuggets, you empower individuals to grasp the essence of the strategy and apply it effectively in their roles.

Try this handy tool!

Consider utilizing the attached template to craft a clear plan for prioritizing strategy on the agenda within your organization. Specify the frequency at which strategy is currently and will be addressed in the future, identify the forums where it will be discussed, and outline the methods and level of involvement.

Conclusion: Create a Pulse

By instilling a rhythm of strategic engagement throughout the organization, we demystify strategy and empower every individual to contribute to its success. Remember, strategy isn't just for the boardroom—it's a guiding force that should permeate every aspect of organizational life.

By embracing small, frequent interactions and fostering a culture of storytelling and simplicity, we can ensure that strategy remains relevant, actionable, and impactful at all levels of the organization.

Looking for support for your next strategic move?

If you're eager to enhance your strategic capabilities and achieve your organizational goals, please consider contacting me!

Strategy on the Agenda

CREATE A PLAN FOR GETTING STRATEGY ON THE MENU

	Today	What we are aiming for in order to succeed with our strategy
How frequently do we have strategy on the agenda?		
At which forums do we address strategy?		
How much time do we spend on it?		
How do we address it?		

