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## Research Article

# STRATEGIC THINKING KEY FOR FUTURE SUCCESS IN ORGANIZATION

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### ABSTRACT

The article is focused on strategic thinking and it is analysed as a basic process in organization for future success. Different points of view are mentioned and the fundamental importance of strategic thinking and management process in our daily responsibilities. Strategic thinking is described as a leader's specific way of thinking that gives opportunity to analyze comprehensive processes and use an effective strategy for future development. Here is described the meaning of strategic thinking for people to become open-minded and to rise human relationships at the better level and create connections between ideas and final results in future. For leaders who are interested in increasing their knowledge about strategic thinking to become a strategic thinker are mentioned a few ways and nine steps to become a strategic thinker. The attention is paid to global century environment and specific needs for leaders in defense, like strategic military thinking. Such kind of thinking helps to build a great capacity and understanding for both analysis and synthesis which are necessary to assemble the data on which military leaders can make their better strategy execution requires and creative research and to jump at nonstandard decisions for future armed forces development.

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## INTRODUCTION

In our days, in 21 century, day by day leaders need more and more knowledge and experience to be capable of getting the right decision in limit period of time. To achieve these level leaders must learn and train a lot now and in the future. Helpful in each situation can be something that brings strategic point of view like strategic thinking.

Ben Herberster said "The greatest waste in the world is the difference between what we are and what we could become". The strategic thinking process can help to overcome the difference. Strategic thinking is a complex process which final results connect with basic advantage in organization (Horwath, 2012). It is a mental ability of individuals to think creatively and to achieve final success. It is also very important characteristic for an organization where are implied different people's point of view and strategic thinking involves insights to create important advantage and benefit for the organization. When people enhance their knowledge about strategic thinking, they can contribute their perception, energy and participation in planning other innovative practices. It depends on everyone in organization and especially on the leaders who have to be opened minded and positive about organization's future. When an organization has a group which is engaged with strategic

thinking it is highly possible to create more valuable and active dialogue and find an appropriate final decision. It is in accordance with collective strategic way of thinking to find a better final result.

What makes strategic thinking and strategy "strategic" (Duhaime *et al*, 2012)? Now that thinking and strategy has been defined and the strategy formulation and implementation processes have been described. Let's consider what makes strategic thinking "strategic". One way to clarify these terms is to distinguish between decisions and actions that are "strategic" and those that are more "tactical". Every day, many times leaders have to take a variety of decisions. The majority of these decisions will respond to routine issues, while others have the potential to affect the health or direction of the process in a much more fundamental way. These critical, direction-setting decisions are the focus of strategic thinking and they are "strategic". Strategic thinking and final decisions not only shape and define an organization, but they also have the potential to affect the bottom-line health of a structure and even the survival of the organization. As a result strategic thinking and management is a fundamentally important activity. It's crucial important how leaders respond to important issues can affect the health and prosperity of their structure in the long run as well as in the short run.

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Strategic thinking is focused on the best final results in the future by finding and developing a valuable and creative dialogue between people who are involved in an organization's development. Strategic thinking helps leaders uncover potentially important opportunities for future organization's development, create a valuable strategic plan and focus attention for target opportunities. Strategic thinking is a fundamental process which gives the leaders the opportunity to understand the global view, main leaders in future process and to create better relationships based on mutual confidence, main leaders and their relationships. This way of thinking and looking forward gives a broad spectrum of information, knowledge and ability to make an organization foreside.

It is not easy to be a strategic thinker. So far such kind of thinkers is not enough. They usually search and look forward for something new different, unusual and have a different perspective of view. This way of thinking gives the opportunity about strategic perspectives and helps to avoid unpredictable circumstances. A person with strategic perspective can fill the filings, has a sense point of conflict and try to balance atmosphere with appropriate arguments. Such kind of a person has a deeper logical process of thinking, which helps him to see the relationships between basic elements in organization and when questions or problems arise to find and to hear of a problems and find appropriate solution to solve them.

Strategic thinking is high level of thinking and its aim is to predict challenges, situations and conditions to build and develop a capacity for organization's strategic foresight by analyzing different future scenarios. In nowadays is not enough to ask questions like "What" and "Why" to make a strategic research and prepare a deeper analyse for organizational situation. It needs strategic environmental analysis, worldwide priorities, basic current organization's situation, relationships and ect. There is a difference between strategic thinking and strategic planning. "Strategic planning isn't strategic thinking. One is analysis, and the other is synthesis" (Mintzberg, 1994). Strategic thinking is innovative process which involves creativity and thinker's intuition and base on synthesis. The final result from strategic thinking is an integrated vision for future organization's development. Strategic thinking is integrated manager's point of view from his education and organizational experience and then synthesizing everything into strategy for future success.

General Andre Beaufre wrote in 1963 that "Strategic thinking is a mental process, at once abstract and rational, which must be capable of synthesizing both psychological and material data. The strategist must have a great capacity for both analysis and synthesis; analysis is necessary to assemble the data on which he makes his diagnosis, synthesis in order to produce from these data the diagnosis itself and the diagnosis in fact amounts to a choice between alternative courses of action" (Beaufre, 1965). It's important especially for military people who are deeply involved in comprehensive processes of relationship between different people, have responsibilities for equipment and final result from battles.

No common agreement and final definition for strategic thinking so far. Nevertheless knowledge and thinking keep moving away and help leaders to create better strategy day by day. "Strategy in today's competitive environment landscape is moving away from the basic strategic planning to more of

strategic thinking in order to remain competitive" (Heracleous, 1998). It's necessary to mention that both processes are important and they have to work and improve together. The engine of strategy is the human factor who can write such kind of document and for its execution is needed a leader. This leader is the one who can bring strategic thinking inside and can define the future. Strategic thinker knows how to use the oral and body language and has strong behaviour which helps him to focus the audience attention on the core of the problem. Those leaders who are well educated and have creative thinking can go through the process of identifying strategic issues, prioritise them and find a strategic choices for common understanding in organization.

Strategic thinking is a challenge in any organization, but it is particularly problematic in some of them. Taking greater leadership responsibilities, leaders need to learn how to think more strategically and develop an effective strategy for their unit or organization. Strategic thinking is a specific way of thinking and gives tools to undertake a thorough strategic diagnosis and ability to analyse capabilities, strengths, weaknesses and opportunities, and identify capability and resource gaps in own leading context that could impact leader strategy's implementation. By developing ability to judge risk and value-creating potential, military think more clearly about future challenges, developing new models and innovating to improve performance. Leader will walk away with a strategic roadmap and action plan which directs strategic planning process toward growth opportunities. Strategic thinking gives opportunity to develop a creative research and to jump at nonstandard decisions for future armed forces development or brand new level technical equipment and technology.

Applying strategic thinking comes down to building human connections and really listening to others. When we take the time to listen to our customers, peers, direct reports and leaders, they feel seen. This validates the relationships you build. Then strategic thinking becomes about helping set each other up for success. And that really is the essence of what drives true purpose for many of us in the work we do as leaders.

Someone who thinks strategically is very open-minded and able to question and evaluate information. Critical thinking improves comprehension, challenges generally-accepted systems of thought, opening the way for innovation. Individuals with these qualities are valuable assets and sought-after by forward-thinking employers. The Liane Davey puts it this way: "Strategic people create connections between ideas, plans and people that others fail to see" (Davey, 2014).

Strategic thinking is a new approach which needs special ability to come up with organizational challenges and create a clear future view for rapidly and successful development. Such kind of thinking helps leaders to revise policy issues and aims, determine organizational priorities and opportunities for their implementation and perform long term planning. This way of thinking gives opportunity to do Strategic planning. It is an organizational management activity that is used to set priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations, ensure that subordinated and other stakeholders are working toward common goals, establish agreement around intended outcomes/results, and assess and adjust the organization's direction in response to a changing environment. Strategic

thinking determines is focused efforts that give fundamental answers about structure, aims, what is going to do and how implement the future plan for development. Effective strategic planning articulates not only where a force is going and the actions needed to make progress, but also how it will know if it is successful.

As it was mentioned before strategic thinking is a special kind of mental process which needs deeper understanding of situation and challenges. For such kind of thinking it would be good to ensure a normal environment without any stress. Usually it is free time when one can relax, have enough time and can get some ideas naturally from television or conversation with friends. This time is appropriate to focus attention on yourself as an organization's leader and individual who need to raise not only the productivity in daily work but also the relationship with subordinates. It doesn't matter what is the current position in organization, at the top or in the bottom. All members need to realize the need of strategic thinking and to practice it at different levels in accordance with responsibilities. That brings friendly environment and helps to be open-minded and creative, think positive and find an optimal solution in critical situation. It is easy to be passive and to move slowly day by day, without future point of view. But it is not productive and doesn't bring anything better. All that is necessary to organization is through strategic thinking to achieve realistic dreams which one day will come true. Strategic thinking helps to put some mental time aside to think about our future as individuals and leaders, to make future organizational perspectives and realize them in a long term.

Strategic thinking is a special ability which is needed especially in specific areas like defence. Strategic thinking is in itself to define and it is the word strategic that poses the most difficulty. There is some understanding that the strategic level of war is at highest political-military level and being that which involves significant decisions, which are closely and linked to vital national interests or foreign policy objectives. Various authorities define several different levels of strategic thinking - from National security strategy through to Military strategy and tactical operations. For those who think that the term strategic necessarily implies the generation and deployment of large armies, fleets and air forces, like in the past are in a wrong track. Strategic thinking must start with the basics. It includes the development and intellectual mastery and deep understanding of international and domestic trends.

Strategic way of thinking helps to become a strategic thinker:

- Current analyzes help to understand organizational needs and make better relationship between senior managers and staff view in process to reach priorities;
- Provide important information in ways that could promote priorities;
- Identify the important goals and try to find appropriate ways to submit them for senior managers and line staff.

So far no answer is quite obvious and clear enough how to be a strategic thinker (Floyd and Woldridge, 1996). To become a strategic thinker you need to have a good knowledge, experience and to be familiar with future basic priorities, strategic environment and relationships and to take a lot of time

to analyze current situation and make prognosis for future development.

Some basic directions for leaders to become a strategic thinker:

- Need to learn every day, as much as possible about organization and its internal and external condition and to be prepared for unexpected situations. To be deeply involved in daily responsibilities and especially the ones of the team, first between others. Dynamic changes in century situation can change very fast so it's necessary to be ready for unexpected circumstances;
- Take a step forward and see how the organization's needs and priorities. What kind of technical equipment and additional employees will be needed if the organization develop successful growth or in case to be out of luck how it can be avoided;
- Realize the basic priorities in senior management process and make an analytic approach to your dealings with it. Think about perspectives, important organizational priorities, and which of them have the best chance to be viewed positively and worked successful.

There are nine steps approach for strategic thinking (Wootton and Horne, 2010) and they help to realize the process, as follow: Step 1 - Gather Strategic Intelligence; Step 2 - Assess Strategic Capability; Step 3 - Create Strategic Knowledge; Step 4 - Make Strategic Predictions; Step 5 - Develop Strategic Vision; Step 6 - Create Strategic Opinions; Step 7 - Take Strategic Decisions; Step 8 - Create and Communicate Market-Led Strategy; Step 9 - Plan and Manage Project to Implement Change.

Strategic thinking directs present action and improves future performance. Understanding the central role of strategic thinking, the rapid rate of security environment and the importance of organizational learning is critical to organizational success and changes. Leaders usually cannot recommend strategic changes without first changing their own mental model.

In the 21st century environment is a complex of challenging and security is described with different threats. Therefore strategic thinking is appropriate style for military leaders. Strategic thinking can help military leaders enhance performance in their unpredictable daily responsibilities. Military leaders that use strategic thinking as like an element of their management day by day become better leader and it helps them in appropriate way to get a smart strategic decisions. They become not only more capable to see and recognize changes in security environment and orient in comprehensive situation but also to become more adept in predicting situation in complex difficult environment. They start to look at the environment from different and more realistic point of view and can formulate strategies in a way to do more successful and capable job of reaching a new potential. Strategic thinking is a key and fundamental defence leaders' characteristic which enables for successful leading with more logical, confident decisions. That's why in defence has begun to introduce initiatives to enhance focus in capacity for strategic thinking. This demands not only solid comprehension of all aspects of knowledge, but also an overarching joint and corporate understanding of all issues. Strategic military thinking helps to create deeper

understanding in the broad spectrum of critical defence capabilities which have a crucial role to develop a single view of a complex organization and to aligning its many activities. Strategic military thinking helps senior defence leaders to learn more carefully and profoundly strategic environment, retain a force perspective and predict the future. They need to network and relate with a number of senior public servants to be able to promote defence effectively and to describe the future armed force development. Strategic military thinking helps also defence leader's sustenance and develop the ability to synthesize and prioritize the many components of defence is an important capabilities that need to be enhanced.

## CONCLUSION

Strategic thinking is a basic leader's characteristic and in defence it is a complex, challenging task in today's global and technologically advancing military environment and needs to be maintained and further developed. That's why is necessary to mention three basic items when using the way of strategic thinking:

First of all the leaders make the decisions that form the basis of strategies, so to understand structure strategies and to understand why some units outperform others we must understand the strategic way of thinking that helps and causes leaders to take a particular set of decisions rather than some other set of decisions;

Second is that the usual way of thinking today will almost certainly be ineffective in the near future because world compete fast in dynamic, not static environments. Latest technologies and demographics change rapidly organizational needs and change the way and necessity of thinking needs to think dynamically about strategy like a product of thinking. Military leaders must be informed and use brand-new information in decision making process.

Third is the crucial importance of organizational knowledge and learning. The tasks of leaders in erudition and knowledge are highly intensive and they must be able to combine excellent knowledge and practical experience in expertise. All working activities today are becoming increasingly knowledge-intensive. Knowledge resides in organizations in the heads of leaders and subordinated in routines and standard operating procedures, where equipment and technologies are very important. As the world becomes increasingly knowledge-intensive, the ability to learn, store, retrieve and exploit new knowledge and brand-new information will become a key source of competitive advantage in process of strategic military thinking.

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