

News You Can Use

by Haidee Allerton

THE BIG GIANT HEAD*

THEY'RE BACK! Big Thinkers, that is. The 1960s was the heyday of Big Thinkers, according to a *Business Week* cover story by John A. Byrne (August 26, 1996). Back then, B-school grads walked into top jobs with top companies, based mainly on the premise that their degrees qualified them as strategy specialists. Then, the bubble burst.

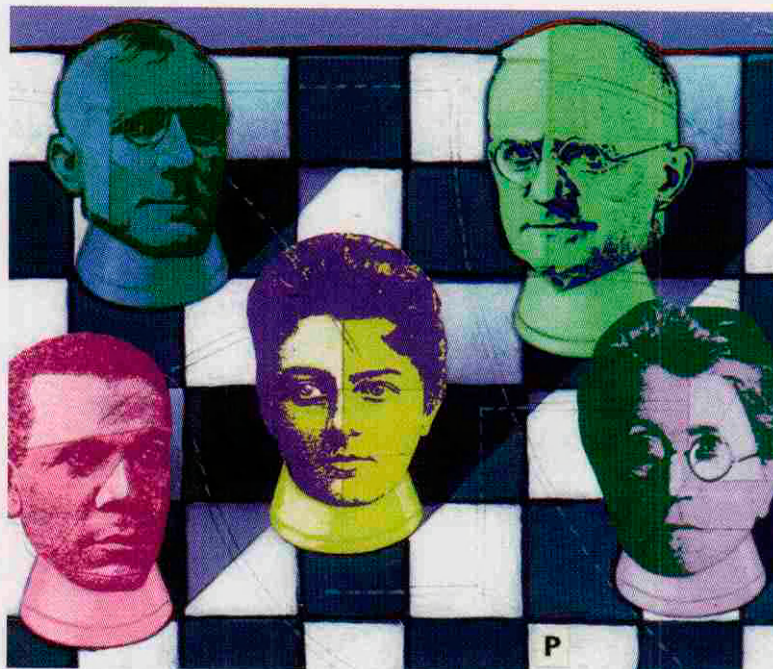
By the 1980s, many U.S. corporations didn't have time to sit back and strategize; they were too busy trying to shore up against the tide of global competition—which meant improving quality, restructuring, downsizing, and so forth.

But here's the thing: Now, the same newly reengineered companies want to profit from those painful changes. So, they need...yep, strategic planning. The "vision thing"—rising above the daily minutia to contemplate the future and how your company will not only survive, but also succeed. That

HOT NEW JOB TITLE

VICE PRESIDENT of Passionate People and Performance at Red Robin International (aka director of training)

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means a new breed of gurus, consulting firms, and internal strategic planning groups at companies like Hewlett-Packard, United Parcel Service, Sears, and IBM.

In fact, a recent survey by the Association of Management Consulting Firms found that executives, consultants, and B-school professors agree that business strategy is now the most critical management issue and will continue to be for at least the next five years.

One reason is the growing investment in technology. Companies can't afford to target such investments in the wrong strategic direction.

One has only to look at IBM to see how devastating poor strategy can be—as when the Big Blue failed to maintain its lead in the personal-computer market.

Of course, this trend comes with its own set of

buzzwords. Here are a few:

▶ Value migration. The movement of growth and profit opportunities from one industry player to another.

▶ Co-evolution. The idea that by working with direct competitors, customers, and suppliers, a company can create new businesses, markets, and industries.

▶ White-space opportunity. New areas of growth possibilities that fall between the cracks because they don't naturally match the skills of existing business units.

▶ Strategic intent. A tangible corporate goal or destiny that represents a stretch for the organization. Also implies a point of view about the competitive position a company hopes to build in the coming decade.

▶ Business ecosystem. A system in which companies work cooperatively and competitively to support new products, satisfy

customers, and create the next round of innovation in key market segments.

(*The Big Giant Head? That's the Big Thinker on the TV series, *3rd Rock From the Sun*.)

VROOM, VROOM!

HERE ARE 10 keys to rev up team building, from *HR Reporter*:

1. Create a common vision and alignment of purpose.
2. Implement vision-based planning.
3. Establish individual and team-role accountabilities.

4. Set ground rules for high-performance teamwork.
5. Generate responsibility and commitment.
6. Develop win-win team relationships.
7. Build group synergy and trust.
8. Give performance-based feedback for continuous improvement.
9. Manage results-oriented meetings.
10. Enroll others in the team's vision.



The original source is *Vroom! Turbo-Charged Team Building* by Michael Shandler and Michael Egan (Amacom Books).

A PSS CONSORTIUM

THE PERFORMANCE Support Systems Group is a new consortium of PSS consultants and developers. Its goals are

How To

More than ever, people are responsible for their professional development, but they put it on the back burner due to time constraints.

Here's a how-to checklist from Personnel Decisions for getting in some professional development every day. The actions take only five minutes.

- ▶ Give yourself a daily dose of development. Make it part of your routine. Spend time focusing on situations with high potential for change that let you control the outcome, that force you to think in new ways, and that challenge you to do more with less.

- ▶ Be opportunistic. Leverage your strengths by using them in new ways, or scan for events that let you learn something beyond the scope of your job. Step back from your work to see how issues look from others' perspectives.

- ▶ Be proactive. Think of an aspect of your job that you do especially well. Reframe current opportunities by adding new challenges. Can you

make them more strategic? Can you get them done in half the time? Get involved in cross-functional or interdepartmental activities.

- ▶ Take intelligent risks. As you develop, you have to redefine success; separate what you learn from how you perform. Intelligent risks involve a reasonable chance for success and a reasonable measure of doubt. Learning occurs at the boundary between stretching the limits and going over the edge.

- ▶ Face your barriers. The three common ones are procrastination, inertia, and lack of time. Set smaller goals, and don't expect dramatic change right away.

Above all, make development a job priority, and hold yourself accountable.

The original source is Development First: Strategies for Self-Development by David Peterson and Mary Dee Hicks (Personnel Decisions International).

- ▶ to promote understanding of performance support
- ▶ to respond to demand for PSS consulting and development services
- ▶ to communicate the capacity and services offered by members of the group
- ▶ to provide a forum for group members to discuss further development of the field

- ▶ to fund activities beneficial to the field of performance support and its

practitioners.

Member companies include Ariel, Avalon, Comware, Consultec, Gery Associates, RWD, UserTech, and WPI.

EYE ON PARTNERSHIPS

PARTNERSHIPS are on the rise—between companies, and between companies and educational

Trend Watch

Future workplaces must welcome myriad lifestyles, says the Society for Human Resource Management. Here are some projected figures compiled by SHRM from the U.S. Census Bureau.

- ▶ Childless married couples and single people will represent one of the fastest growing groups in the workforce in the next millennium—from 44.2 million never-married adults in 1994 to an expected almost 67 million by 2010.

- ▶ The first of the baby boomers will turn 65 in 15 years. Many will continue to work past retirement age because of better health care and changing lifestyles.

- ▶ Ethnic minorities will make up 28 percent of the workforce by 2005. This trend will place more emphasis on diversity programs.



NOT A GOOD SIGN

Here's how to tell an employee may be about to quit, from Personnel Decisions.

- He or she
 - ▶ won't go the extra mile
 - ▶ complains a lot
 - ▶ watches the clock
 - ▶ is disengaged
 - ▶ often calls in sick
 - ▶ shows no job ownership.

to maximize impact. The pie gets bigger and more equitably distributed. And all parties gain mutual competitive advantage.

- ▶ Intimacy. Successful partnerships move beyond transactional relationships to achieve closeness in a business context.
- ▶ Vision. It can be grand and sweeping or simple and pragmatic, but it must be present. Vision can originate from a seller's or a customer's organization, as long as it is shared.

institutions, to foster learning and performance improvement. So, what makes for a successful partnership?

Here are three main ingredients for a successful mix, from *Spotlight on Performance*:

- ▶ Impact. This is the capacity of the partnership to deliver tangible results, increase productivity, add value, and improve profitability.

All parties must change

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