

Stratactics Overview

Updated March 1, 2008

People tend to resist change. In business, that can be a problem because innovating new products and services requires everyone -- from executives, to managers, to sales and production teams, to customers -- to do something which is inherently difficult. It forces people to change their behaviors.

But behavior change cannot take place if people do not find the required changes personally meaningful. When the rationale for change and its personal meaning are clearly defined, resistance decreases. When employees are clear on the context and meaning, they can prepare for any physical or emotional risks associated with the required change. They can feel safe enough to initiate the new action.

Stratactics is a Boulder, Colorado, training and management consulting firm founded by Darrell Mullis and Michael Higgins. These veteran entrepreneurs and strategic thinkers share a common philosophy that good managers cannot become good leaders until they are ready to see the big picture.

That picture can only come into focus by blending strategy and tactics – in other words, to solve a business problem there must be context as well as content. By changing the way people think and behave in workplace relationships, Stratactics teaches people to use, rather than avoid, their deep-seated emotions to communicate directly, respectfully and with passion. This creates the ability to strategically intervene in challenging or potentially negative situations and results in a culture of rapid collaboration and authentic communication.

Stratactics creates customized programs that address two of the most critical areas of leadership capability—accountability in communication and behavior; and business and financial acumen for operational strategy and tactics. Once business leaders and managers master the principles, they can provide their

teams with the skills and tools to engage in passionate innovation and problem solving. The result is a highly productive organization focused on achieving its strategic objectives and developing capable leaders from top to bottom.

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Stratactics at a Glance

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Corporate name: **Stratactics** represents the blend of strategy and tactics needed to solve almost every critical business issue. This blend is out of balance in most managers. They are usually great “doers” (too tactical). Doers focus on content rather than concept or context. Without context, behavior change lacks meaning. The result is resistance to the desired change. Once employees understand the reasons for the change in a personally meaningful way, resistance decreases. To put it more simply, without the strategy, tactics are meaningless.

Principals: Darrell Mullis and Michael Higgins

Founded: 2001

Employees: Four full-time staff

Programs: Stratactics conducts in-depth training programs for multinational corporations that take several months, as well as one-two-day seminars and online programs for small to mid-size companies. All programs address two critical areas for any business:

Accountable Communication teaches leaders how to communicate directly, authentically and resourcefully, even in highly challenging difficult situations.

Financial Communication for managers, sales professionals and employees teaches the core business and financial principles that companies must master to make important strategic decisions.

Clients: ABB Global Sales Group; Sturm Foods; Wachovia Securities; Village Homes; Almatris; Herman Miller; Maricopa Integrated Health System; Amcor; Wild Oats; Retail Investment Group, Sunclipse of North America

Web site: www.stratactics.com

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Principals

Darrell Mullis

Darrell Mullis, co-founder of Stratactics, is an author, entrepreneur and educator of business leaders. With a degree in Civil Engineering from N.C. State University, his entrepreneurial experience includes 10 years as owner/general manager of a construction company in Burlington, Vermont. He left construction in the 1980's and has spent the past 25 years in business education, working in North America, South America, Europe, and Asia. Client companies include ABB Ltd., Wachovia, Turner Broadcasting, Fidelity Investments, Herman Miller, and Almatris.

Darrell is co-author of *The Accounting Game*, TM and one of the world's leading experts in teaching communication and financial acumen to corporate sales people, managers, and employees. He believes that companies need people from top to bottom who can communicate meaning and inspiration to others, take a stand on critical issues, support growth and development in others, intervene in emotionally challenging situations, and understand and implement the strategic and financial objectives of their organization.

The programs offered by Stratactics teach the principles, skills and tools to create these leadership qualities that help companies maximize the creative and productive potential of their managers and workforce.

Darrell lives with his family in Boulder, Colorado.

Michael Higgins

Michael Higgins, co-founder of **Stratactics**, is an entrepreneur and an expert in the creation and deployment of training methods and processes for individuals, groups and leaders in business. He has an extensive background in sales and has specialized in entrepreneurial start-ups, enhancing, selling and delivering

intellectual property developed by the original creators.

During the 1980s and early 1990s, Michael traveled around the globe, researching and studying systems of accelerated adult learning and behavior change from village medicine men in the Andean Mountains to ashrams in the rural Indian countryside to business and personal development trainings in the United States. His experiences and discoveries led to the design and delivery of personal development workshops to audiences of individuals, families and businesspeople across the U.S.

Since the mid-1990s, Michael has focused exclusively on the development, sales and delivery of training processes in the professional or business arena. He has consulted on a range of training projects, including finance, leadership, communication, and customer service for companies like ABB, Steelcase, Wachovia Securities, Midas, Limited Brands and Herman Miller. The projects have resulted in positive, long-term change in company culture, individual behavior, and business outcomes.

Michael grew up in Hawaii and attended Chaminade College and the University of Hawaii. He currently lives in Boulder, Colorado with his wife Susan and three daughters and still heads for the beach every chance he gets.

Stratactics Programs

Accountable Communication

Most leaders stumble in difficult or emotionally charged situations because they have not learned how to be direct, authentic and strategic in their communication and behavior. Stratactics takes the mystery out of communication and miscommunication to help participants become better leaders.

Introduction to Accountable Communication: A one-day introductory program for front-line employees.

2-day Basic Course: Leaders learn the basics of accountable communication and practice the methodology in real-life situations.

Advanced Program: Participants in this two-day program gain the ability to be congruent in verbal and non-verbal communication without the use of words.

Implementation Program: This extended program allows participants to implement accountability in communication and behavior in day-to-day work situations with defined specific measurable business objectives.

Coaches Program: Participants learn how to coach others in the principals of accountable behavior and communication.

Financial Communication

Even though financial performance is at the heart of almost every business decision, most salespeople and managers do not really understand what financial concepts mean and how they impact performance. Stratactics takes the mystery out of financial concepts and makes everyone a better business person.

Financially Strategic Selling: For sales people who need financial acumen to sell to C-level executives

Financial Decision Making For Managers: For managers and key staff who make decisions that affect profits, cash flow and return on capital employed.

Introduction to Business and Financial Performance: For frontline and new employees who need basic business acumen to understand where they fit in accomplishing the company's strategic objectives.

Online Training: For sales people, managers or employees who need or prefer financial training in an electronic format

Train the Trainer: Participants learn how to deliver Stratactics programs to their employees.

Leadership vs. Management

Leadership

It sounds simple, but the difference between leaders and managers is that leaders lead and managers manage. Managers are the doers. They are tactical. They organize and delegate. Leaders are thinkers. They are strategic. They inspire and motivate. To be successful in business, an organization needs both.

In the animal kingdom, leaders are determined by strength or aggression. In society and in business, the ability to inspire – to instill passion in others - is what separates leaders from managers. Some leaders just have it. They are “natural born leaders” who have the charisma to make others believe in them. Others are conscious leaders who understand strategy and use psychology to motivate individuals, groups and organizations. Either way, the capacity to lead is what gives leaders the ability to convince groups of people toward behavior changes that benefit the organization or the society.

Leadership is generally associated with authority. It can be based on bloodlines, seniority or competition, but it is almost always good to be the King. In a democracy, leaders are elected. In business, leaders are chosen based on experience, skill and character. In some organizations, they are groomed, grown and developed.

Like lemmings or sheep, some people follow leaders based on their personalities. In business, employees follow people who lead by example. They must possess the skills to think strategically, build collaborations, and gain respect by communicating the big picture to people from top to bottom.

Effective leaders inspire others to achieve the organization’s mission, goals and objectives. Good leaders are:

- Visionary

- Entrepreneurial
- Committed
- Passionate
- Positive
- Inspirational
- Role models

Management

Some trace the history of management back to the pyramid builders in ancient Egypt, but the fundamentals of modern business management began with the economic theories of 19th century philosophers like John Stuart Mill and the innovations of industrial revolution inventors like Eli Whitney and James Watt.

Management principals were further refined by Joseph Wharton, who founded the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania in 1881, and the Harvard Business School, which created the Masters in Business Administration (MBA) degree in 1921.

From production to human resources to marketing and information technology, modern business management has evolved from a military style system based on control to a more democratic system based on facilitation and collaboration. Management must balance the needs of employees, shareholders and other stakeholders keep everyone happy and still manage to produce successful results for the organization.

Leaders vs. Managers

While managers need leadership skills and leaders need management skills, noted management consultant Warren Bennis points out some clear distinctions:

- Managers administer, leaders innovate
- Managers ask how and when, leaders ask what and why

- Managers focus on systems, leaders focus on people
- Managers do things right, leaders do the right things
- Managers maintain, leaders develop
- Managers rely on control, leaders inspire trust
- Managers have a short-term perspective, leaders have a longer-term perspective
- Managers accept the status-quo, leaders challenge the status-quo
- Managers have an eye on the bottom line, leaders have an eye on the horizon
- Managers imitate, leaders originate
- Managers emulate the classic good soldier, leaders are their own person
- Managers copy, leaders show originality

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