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## Preface

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### From Strategy Frustration to Strategy Satisfaction

Repeated reorientation, growth, the conquering of other markets, repositioning and reviewing of value creation concepts are becoming more and more routine due to many global trends and developments. This applies in fact to all of us who play a role in the shaping and management of a company. My experience as a management consultant in a large number of strategy and reorganisation projects in the most varied companies—from global corporations to middle-sized companies and non-profit-making organisations—has shown me that there are two factors in particular which make up the art of strategy and, in particular, its implementation:

1. Strategy must be understood as a tool—as a means towards reaching entrepreneurial goals, instead of becoming an end in itself.
2. From the very beginning of the strategic work the end, namely the implementation, should be in sight—because in strategic work the only thing which really counts are its consequences within and for the company.

Taking the end into consideration right from the beginning has a strong influence on the planning of a procedure within the strategy process as well as on the choice of suitable methods. It is far too often the case that a “random” choice is made from the absolutely endless diversity of methodological tools rather than a purposeful one which is optimally adapted neither to the business and its situation nor to the capabilities of those involved in the strategy process. Entrepreneurial cultures can have very differing characteristics: in many businesses the executives are experienced strategists and have routine in the development and implementation of strategies. In controversial discussions they tackle the critical issues honestly and openly using accepted models; in other cases exactly the opposite happens. With regard to the success of the strategy process this must be taken into consideration from the very onset. Besides the methodical approach, the treatment of the socio-emotional complexity plays an important role, and in this case a skilful policy is required. By “policy” I mean reaching the entrepreneurial goals with the help of a

strategy. This should be developed, bearing in mind the prevailing conditions, and should be pushed through in spite of the resistance inevitably connected with it.

The fact that in some companies a certain “strategy frustration” has developed, can in my opinion be due to the following reasons:

- Corporate decision-makers and executives usually place their focus on the operational business, but much more seldom on the strategy. To a certain extent this is acceptable because this means that a high degree of professionalism is generated in daily operations. On the other hand, however, there is a lack of “practice” in the development and implementation of strategies. Should strategic work be demanded, there is often a lack of experience in carrying it out with the same measure of professionalism and routine.
- There is thus a conglomeration of “negative experiences” in the strategy work. It is true that the individual methods and tools are partly known, but it is often not clear at all as to whether their use in each problem or business situation is at all advisable. Thus strategists are frequently unable to cope. The search radius set can far too quickly become too narrow so that only obvious alternatives are considered and, where appropriate, “hidden” but strategically attractive possibilities are overlooked. Or the search radius is too broad. The right methodological tools are used with good intentions and plenty of impetus but for the wrong purposes or with the wrong intensity. They are often used very intensively at the beginning of a strategy project and worked through with “academic thoroughness”, only to be gradually forgotten when the strategists begin to get more and more bogged down and disoriented.
- The strategy concept developed is often not consistently thought through, the consequences are not scrutinised thoroughly and not “broken down” sufficiently and concretely enough for the operational business. At the end of a complex strategy process the question then arises: “And how should we deal with this in practice?” If this question is not adequately answered, strategic implementation will fail.
- Implementation also comes to nothing if important and influential executives, who are indispensable for the decision in favour of, and implementation of, the strategy, cannot really be convinced of the strategic result and therefore do not encourage the strategy with enough conviction.

Do you recognise a “frustration factor” or even several from your strategy work within the company? Then this book has been written for you! It originated from the daily confrontation with the difficulties which go hand in hand with the use of strategic methods and procedures in practice, in particular also with the problems connected with the implementation of strategies and the principles of change management.



My intention with this book is to offer a “Strategy Scout” to people responsible for a strategy—no matter whether these are managing directors, leaders of a business unit, supervisory boards or owners. The book is intended to serve as a practical guide through the “Strategy Jungle”. It should enable people to work strategically effectively as well as efficiently. Effectively means: target-oriented, with a high degree of assertiveness. Efficiently means: with a high degree of good results from the energy applied so that you arrive at sound results even with limited resources (time, personnel) without getting lost in a diversity of models. After all, in the end there is only one objective: the implementation of the strategy. The focus of this book lies very strongly on the strategic process. It presents a practice-oriented guide which meets the individuals responsible for strategies at exactly the point where they are at present and accompanies them the whole way. In doing so it does not matter at all what the corresponding conditions and corporate culture are like in each case,

- Whether those concerned have a great deal of or little experience in strategy work;
- Whether “trench warfare” is on the agenda within the strategy team or whether speedy agreement prevails within the procedure;
- Whether a strategy already exists and only needs to be reviewed for the future or whether completely new business fields should be opened up with a completely newly developed strategy;
- Which methods and tools have been applied so far and are familiar, and which tend to be new and unfamiliar.

As a “Strategy Scout” this book would, in an entertaining way, like to show the reader which paths of strategy development and ways of implementation he or she should take as an individual responsible for strategy in his or her very specific situation.

There are already numerous books on strategy on the market. Works such as M. E. Porter’s “Competitive Advantage”, H. I. Ansoff’s “Corporate Strategy” or H. Mintzberg’s “The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning” are classics which lack nothing in the way of content. Many approaches and models for further discussion introduced in these and other books are established and have found their way into general practice. Literature however pays far too little attention to how the various approaches and methods can be implemented in practice—and especially how they can be sensibly combined with one another in particular business situations. The humane or emotional and social side of strategy development is notably excluded far too often.

My book conveys neither a “new model” nor a “new” approach nor a “new” method. Instead, while integrating long-standing and proven models and methods, it demonstrates a comprehensible and result-oriented procedure which is in step with actual practice. Strategy is, after all, a “frightfully simple” matter. It entails the answering of some very straightforward questions, the answers to which are often anything but trivial.

I wish you every success in developing your strategy and implementing it.

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Strategy Scout

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