

Becoming a Strategic Leader

By – Louie V. Larimer

Recently, I stumbled upon an interesting white paper focused on the topic of strategic leadership.¹

This publication outlined what the authors believed to be were nine roles, skill sets, or competencies that leaders should fulfill to be strategic in their leadership of an organization.

According to the authors, the nine major roles of a strategic leader are:

1. **Navigator** – Thoughtfully guiding the organization through the complexity of issues, problems, and opportunities that confront the organization, and keeping it on its chosen path to the future.
2. **Strategist** – Creating intelligent and effective strategies to bring about the desired future of the organization.
3. **Entrepreneur** – Recognizing opportunities for new products, services, markets, and ideas for change and improvement.
4. **Mobilizer** – Developing resources, removing barriers, and getting people to do things quickly.
5. **Talent Advocate** – Attracting, developing and retaining executive talent and engaged employees.
6. **Captivator** – Building excitement, passion, and commitment to the mission and vision of the organization.
7. **Thinking Globally** – Bringing a larger and wider perspective with respect to the world in which the organization operates—big picture thinking.
8. **Change Driver** – Creating, embracing, encouraging and making change happen.
9. **Enterprise Guardian** – Ensuring and facilitating responsible, courageous, and ethical decision-making that protects and promotes the best interests of the organization.

You should be aware that the nine role framework embodies thoughts that are not new or groundbreaking. Each role can be traced and found in the writings of many earlier researchers and scholars in the leadership arena.



What is important, however, about the framework, is that it provides a focus and a critical reminder on the meaning of “strategic leadership” as opposed to day to day “operational leadership.”

It specifically reminds us that a leader must not only deal with the *present*, but needs to also think about the *future* and strategically find ways to bring that desired future into existence.

My experience is that many leaders are bogged down with the present and all of the issues of “today” and can’t find the time, or know how to focus effectively on the future and be strategic.

In the next edition of this newsletter, I will share a few specific thoughts on how to be more strategic.

ⁱⁱ Appelbaum & Paese, “*What Senior Leaders Do: Nine Roles of Strategic Leadership*,” published by Development Dimensions International.