

What is Strategic Thinking?

You know the drill. Your team has just been handed the task of landing that new client, or its up to you to start a new customer service program with severely limited resources and even less time. Invariably the next thing said is “we need a new strategy – or “we need to strategize”. But what exactly does it mean to “think strategically”? Strategic thinkers whether on the battlefield, the football field, the classroom, or the boardroom, assess the environment in which they are in and have the ability to make the right decisions to generate the best results.

New Zealand based motivational speaker and peak performance trainer Edmond Otis says that strategic thinkers always think ahead, are clearly focused on their goals, and in vernacular of the martial arts, “they know their enemy - and they know themselves”. Mr. Otis says no matter what stage you are at in a business, or what type of organization, always think long-term, and always think in terms of turning adversity to an advantage. By looking ahead you can remain focused on your goals, and develop real, defined milestones to measure your advancement and success.

Strategic thinking never happens in a vacuum say the Peak Performance experts such as Mr. Otis. Strategic thinkers know the value of collaboration, and how to think strategically not only as an individual but as a group. By thinking strategically in conjunction with others, you gain co-workers perspectives on critical issues, imperative in today's complex business landscape. Even with issues that may on the surface seem to involve only minor decisions, by collaborating with others, you are able to create opportunities for forging stronger, more flexible, more competitive, teams. Teams that know how to work together, and are prepaid to face the tougher and more complex challenges that may lay ahead.

There are several “profiles” of the strategic thinker if you will. From the general on the battlefield, to your favorite teams senior coach. But all strategic thinkers have certain things in common:

- Strategic thinkers are able to sort out emotion from fact, and worry from accurate assessment. In this sense - they are fearless.
- Strategic thinkers have the ability to see patterns among seemingly unrelated events
- Strategic thinkers are skilled at seeing alternatives, thinking creatively, and visualizing new possibilities
- Strategic thinkers challenge assumptions, are open to new ideas and information, and never willing to just accept what is - always shall be.
- Strategic thinkers analyze all data, they sort out and prioritize information
- Strategic thinkers understand the need to make tradeoffs, and are expert negotiators. They know how to balance short-term gains against long-term goals.

Always keep in mind that strategic thinking is an on-going process. Successful strategic thinkers constantly reevaluate their environment and plan ahead for every conceivable eventuality.

Edmond Otis is a keynote speaker and motivational trainer dedicated to giving entrepreneurs, business owners, and key executives the tools they need for success. He has recently reallocated with his family from California to Hawkes Bay New Zealand. To learn more about his services to go www.EdmondOtis.co.nz