

Targeted Teaching Topic



STRATEGIC THINKING COMPETITION VS. COOPERATION

In the book, *The 8th Habit* by Stephen R. Covey, results of a poll conducted by Harris Interactive provided some interesting insights about the value of strategic thinking, cooperation and understanding within a business, and personal satisfaction.

Some of the results are more than a little concerning, given the need for efficient, strategic management in all organizations, especially entrepreneurial ventures.

- Only 37% said they have a clear understanding of what their organization is trying to achieve and why.
- Only half were satisfied with the work they have accomplished at the end of their week.
- Only 15% said they worked in a high-trust environment.
- Only 17% felt their organization fosters open communication that is respectful of differing opinions and that results in new and better ideas.
- Only 13% have high-trust, highly cooperative working relationships with other groups or departments.

Strategic thinking as an entrepreneur is more than just a dollar and cents activity. It involves maximizing one's own strengths, while leveraging the strengths of others. It involves lots of cooperation in order to be of maximum effectiveness.

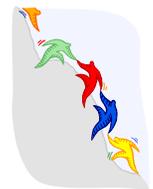
Strategic thinkers look ahead several steps. They anticipate challenges, develop plans to meet and overcome those challenges, and continually search for new and better ways to do things.

In almost all instances, better solutions can be arrived at through team effort and cooperation than from competition. Competition within a business can be cancerous if it is taken to extremes. Pitting one individual against another or teams against each other without very clearly identified reasons and benchmarks can be ruinous to employees' and associates' self-esteem and productivity.

Two of Covey's eight habits apply especially to the themes of Strategic Thinking and Cooperation.

Habit 6—Synergize

Synergy is an alternative to doing things “my way or your way” but rather focus on “our way.” It involves respecting others, valuing their opinions and experiences, and celebrating how working together toward a common goal can be satisfying on many levels.



Habit 8—Voice

Covey defines voice as “unique personal significance.” He says that it is revealed as we face great challenges.



Entrepreneurs can use synergy and voice to increase the productivity of their businesses. It's all about leveraging each person's unique strengths and talents.