

Strategic thinking helps you become a more effective leader and to meet long-term goals. This post will define strategic thinking and explain why it's essential in every role and how you can begin to think strategically.

What is Strategic Thinking, and Why do You Need It?

In a Harvard Business School article, Tim Stobierski defines strategic thinking as "the ability to think through complex business problems critically, align your thoughts with corporate goals, and plan toward the future"

In a Harvard Business research study, 10,000 senior executives responsible for setting leadership goals chose strategic thinking as the most critical behavior to the future of their organizations; the skill/mindset separates average thinkers from exceptional achievers. Outstanding achievers look at the entire plan or project, think about the impact of their decisions, and use the process to devise a plan to meet goals.

When leaders think strategically, it helps them overcome challenges, address setbacks, and meet goals, but not if they only think in the short term. Short-term thinking is immediate, reactionary, and daily. You react the moment something happens, to any issue that arises, or perhaps to a crisis, and though necessary, short-term thinking won't meet long-term goals.

Dorie Clark, author of "The Long Game," says strategic thinking is long-term thinking, enabling leaders to "make smart choices about where people should focus their time and energy. If all you do is respond to stimuli, you never really direct things. Long-term thinking is about making the smart decisions today and understanding what I can do today to make tomorrow better and easier."

Discuss with them and learn what they wish you to prioritize and the result they envision. What is the most important thing? Understanding expectations and priorities will help you think long-term and act strategically daily. Once your boss has communicated their expectations, communicate the strategy to your team.

Every Role Has a Strategic-Thinking Component

Becoming a strategic thinker is essential, no matter your leadership position. It helps you achieve business goals faster and prepares you for roles that develop business strategy. Contemplating the metrics and analytics used to evaluate you and your team is a way to think strategically and display your strategic thinking skills. Aligning your long-term goals with those metrics could position you for advancement. According to Dorie Clark, organizations take notice of strategic thinkers.

"Leaders are identified and groomed based on their ability to be strategic thinkers. And so, the better you are at it, the more you are interested in it, the more you're engaged in the process."

How to think Strategically

The initial step to begin thinking strategically is setting aside time.

You won't think strategically if you don't set aside time. Take time from your schedule to think strategically. Schedule it on your calendar.

Blocking time on the calendar helps to avoid distractions that create short-term thinking. Don't waste **strategic-thinking time** on non-crucial tasks but use it to observe, analyze and self-reflect on how and if you're reaching the performance management goals your boss expects. How long and how often you spend in the process is up to you but take as much time as you need to think about what you can do today to accomplish those performance management goals. Are you where you want to be in your career? If the answer is "yes," devise a plan to achieve even more efficiently.

If the answer is "no," identify ways to improve and reach your goals based on your analysis. If necessary, consult another person and consider opposing views. There could be a better way to accomplish your goals. Unsure who to include or whose opinion to trust? Check out Leader Lab's [Decision-Making](#) content for insight.

Once you've finalized plans for meeting long-term goals, implement the changes you identified as necessary. Set aside more time to think strategically and analyze the changes' impact. Are they working, or should you adjust the plan?

This blog post teaches you why you need to think strategically, defines strategic thinking, explains why it's essential for leaders, and that every role has a strategic component. To begin thinking strategically, implement what you've learned in this post.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2022/02/24/create-strategic-thinking-and-mindset-in-your-workforce/?sh=4ce48e0e61e2>

[4 Ways to Develop Your Strategic Thinking Skills | HBS Online](#)

[The 7 Critical Skills Of Successful Strategic Thinkers \(forbes.com\)](#)[Develop Strategic Thinkers Throughout Your Organization \(hbr.org\)](#)