

**BOARDROOM STRATEGY****MIKE DESJARDINS**

A selection of the best books on strategic planning

There is no “right” strategic planning methodology that works for every company or organization.

In fact, using a blended approach to create a customized methodology will likely yield the best planning framework for you and your company. The question becomes, “Where do I start?”

There have been five key books on strategy written in the past 10 years that provide perspectives on how to approach strategic planning. Here is a brief synopsis of each book, and why it’s worth reading.

Good to Great (Jim Collins): Collins refers to this book as the book he should have written first. *Good to Great* describes in detail the steps that *good* companies have taken to become *great*. From leadership to confronting the brutal facts, simplifying strategy, adding in discipline, understanding the role of technology and discovering what builds momentum with your business, *Good to Great* covers the complete strategy canvas at a high level, simplified in a way that will allow you to share your company’s strategic priorities with everyone in the business.

Built to Last (Jim Collins and Jerry Porras): Before *Good to Great*, Jim Collins collaborated with Jerry Porras to write *Built to Last*. This book is a study of 18 visionary companies and how they differ from their key competitors. The core philosophies are:

- stop reinventing the wheel and instead develop and document the core procedures that can withstand changes in personnel;
- stay focused on your core values while trying new things; and
- focus on the long-term goal – the BHAG (Big Hairy Audacious Goal) – a 10- to 30-year goal of the organization that is so large and so far in the future that it bears that moniker.

Blue Ocean Strategy (W. Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne): Written by two professors from INSEAD, *Blue Ocean Strategy* seeks to understand how companies like *Cirque du Soleil*, *Apple* and *Blockbuster* have changed the foundations of their business models and how they approach the market to move from the Red Ocean, bloody from the fight for market share, to the Blue Ocean, where the companies stand

alone to compete for clients who don’t fit the traditional mould of their “old industry.” Their strategy canvas approach is designed to narrow down the key factors that you and your competitors use as the defining points of service in your in-

This is the story of the game-changers in their industries and how they did it

dustry. Then, by eliminating, creating or changing these key factors, a new industry is formed that appeals to a customer segment not being served by the existing industry. The short version of this would be to say that this is the story of the game-changers in their industries and how they did it.

Mastering the Rockefeller Habits (Verne Harnish): Harnish’s first book is based on the one-page strategic plan that *John D. Rockefeller* had each of his key executives complete at **United Steel**. The book details how to create a plan that summarizes your 30-year, three- to five-year, one-year and

quarterly goals, along with supporting SWOT analysis, financial information (budget and actual) and accountabilities. The real magic is that all of this can fit onto one 8 1/2 x 11 page.

Execution (Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan): Execution speaks to one of the core reasons that most strategic plans fail – a lack of accountability and execution.

Many people think execution is the tactical side of business, best left to those people below the senior team in the organizational hierarchy. Bossidy and Charan argue that execution should be part of an organization’s cultural fabric, starting in the CEO’s office. The book describes a series of behaviours and techniques common within businesses that demonstrate a high level of execution of their plans.

Each of these books has a summary online that does a great job of breaking down the key points and practical applications. What the summaries won’t provide are the examples of real companies whose products and services you recognize and can relate to. Reading some or all of these books will help you

relate the decisions made by other successful companies to the strategic challenges your organization is facing today. ■

Mike Desjardins is the Driver (CEO) at ViRTUS, an organizational development

consulting firm with expertise in strategic planning and implementation, leadership development, change management and succession planning for medium to large organizations. He regularly blogs at www.mikedesjardins.com.



lunch & workshop

**Progress Challenge
& Building Business Attraction Magnets**

With Author Dean Lindsay from Dallas, TX



Friday, November 20, 2009
11:30 AM
Terminal City Club, Vancouver

Learn how to:

- *establish & cement customer loyalty
- *attract quality referrals & new business
- *find progress in a world of radical economic change

1 hour continuing education credit for
CME®, CSE® or SCPS® Professional Certification.

Register online at www.smeivancouver.org
or call 604-266-0090

Sponsored by: **BUSINESS VANCOUVER**

SMEI is the worldwide professional association for sales & marketing.