

Strategic Leadership & Strategic Thinking

A Self-Guided Learning Module



Learning Objectives

In this self-guided learning module, you will:

- Learn a model which can be used to grow as a strategic leader
- Discover the integrated components of strategic leadership
- Explore the key elements of strategic leadership, including strategic thinking
- Learn a model which can be used to grow your strategic thinking skills
- Be introduced to tools aligned with growing skills in each component of the strategic thinking model
- Discover six habits of successful strategic thinkers and six approaches to develop your strategic thinking skills
- Discover what you, as a manager, can do to develop strategic thinking in your staff

UC Core Competency ABCs

Today's learning points as related to the Core Competencies of:

- Change Agility – In order to be ready for leveraging the opportunities that the future has to offer, we must grow our strategic leadership and strategic thinking skills
- Mission and Vision Focus – As an employees of a world-class learning institution, it is the responsibility of all UC Berkeley employees to grow our strategic leadership and strategic thinking skills to remain effective in our work



Berkeley People Management Knowledge Assessment

You may wish to go deeper by identifying your current knowledge (specific to UCB) in nine critical people management areas by completing the UC Berkeley People Management Assessment:

- Compensation and Classification
- Complaints and Grievances
- Disciplinary Action
- Health and Safety
- Leave and Disability Management
- Payroll and Timekeeping
- Performance Management
- Personnel Policies and Contracts
- Recruiting and Hiring

<https://hr.berkeley.edu/berkeley-people-management-knowledge-assessment>

Risk Management

As employees of the University, we all have the responsibility to be stewards of the public's resources. With this in mind, every Berkeley People Management workshop works helps us to mitigate risk to the campus.

From the campus' perspective, programs like this impact overall employee success because well-trained, well-informed managers engage with their teams to promote safe, equitable and stable work environments where everyone can be successful. Through the learning opportunities you will take part in today and through the entire BPM program series, we will engage with you to ensure you have what you need to be successful. You will be able to spot potential issues and mitigate them sooner, and you will know the proper procedure for identifying and addressing challenges and issues within your teams. More broadly, this multi-level program creates the necessary foundation for building a learning culture on campus, and today's program is the start of that foundation.

What is Strategic Leadership

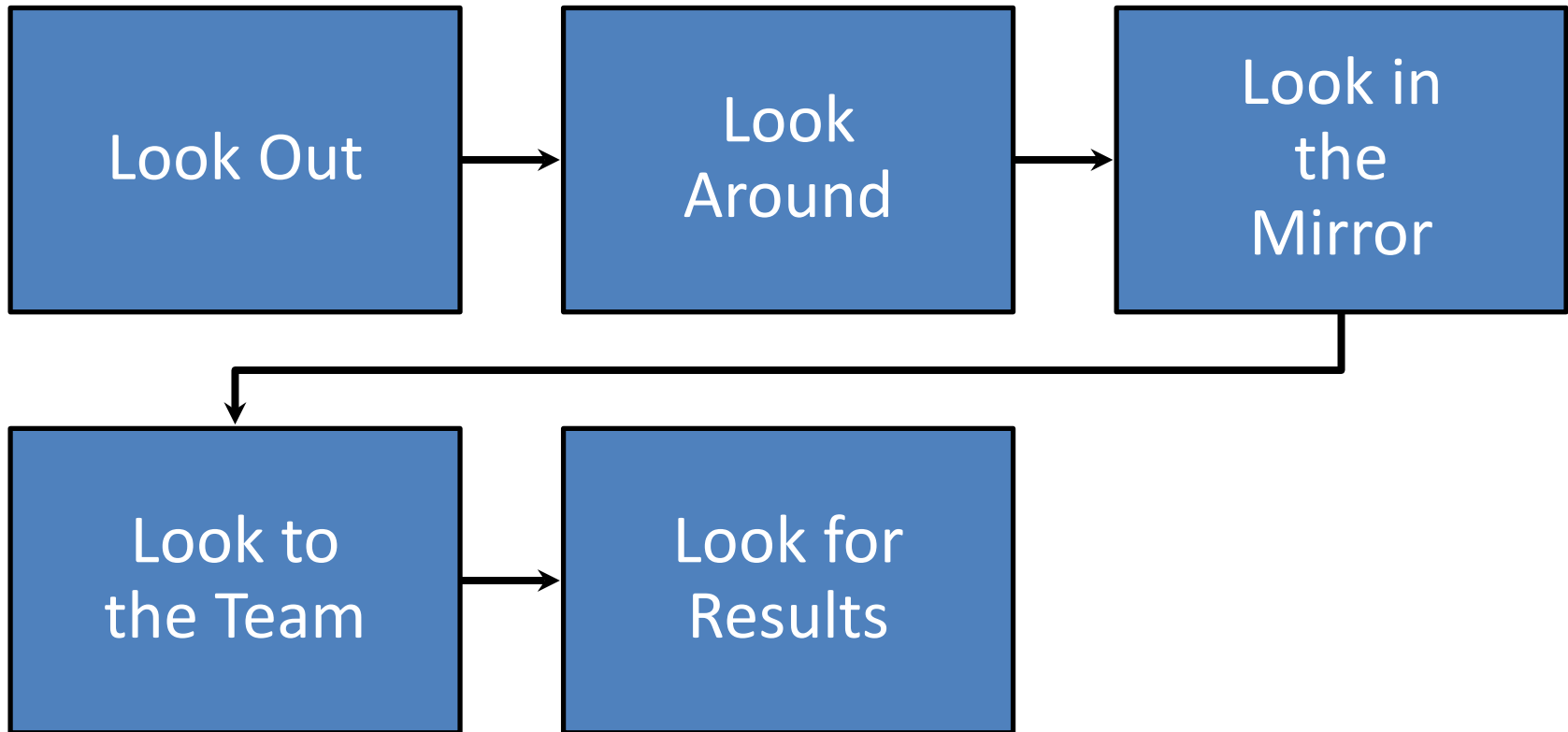
Intro to Strategic Leadership & Strategic Thinking

Words of Wisdom

Dr. Al Vicere of Vicere Associates, Inc. and the Pennsylvania State University has created a strategic leadership model that beautifully demonstrates how leaders can implement strategic thinking into their leader profile.

- Watch the video to learn more: [What is Strategic Leadership](#)

Strategic Leadership Model



Source: Dr. Al Vicere

see more: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6y9rKebJOtY>

Strategic Leaders

Strategic leadership is about diagnosing patterns and focus. This is done by successfully:

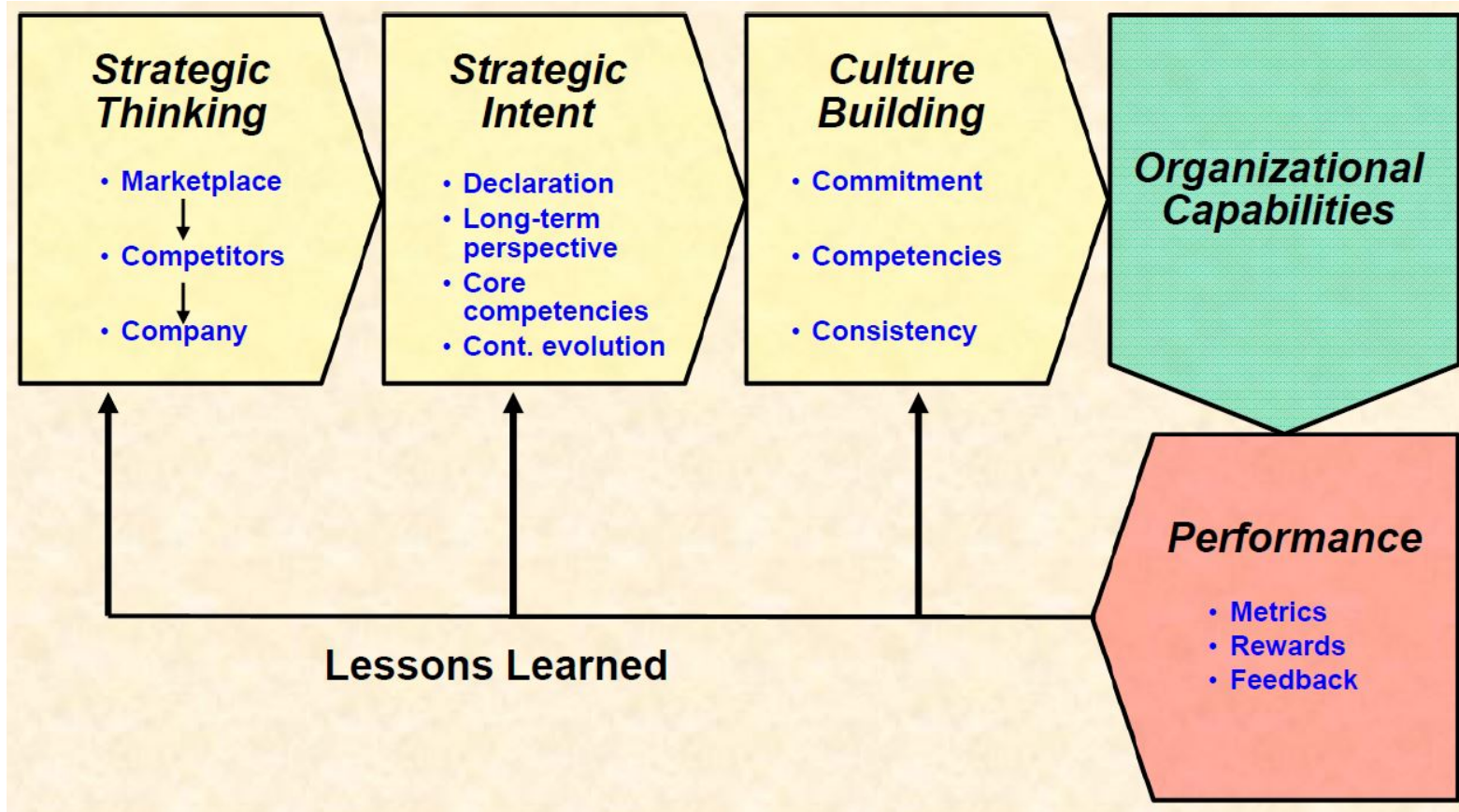
- Looking out
 - *Think Mark Twain: “History don’t repeat itself, but often it rhymes.”*
 - Industry patterns tell a story, don’t miss the patterns; see the story
- Looking around
 - *Think Albert Einstein: “The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.”*
 - Look for growth and success, what do those organizations look like

Strategic Leaders (cont'd)

And by:

- Looking in the mirror
 - *Think E.M. Estes: “Leadership is the courage to admit mistakes, the vision to welcome change, the enthusiasm to motivate others, and the confidence to stay out of step when everyone else is marching to the wrong tune.”*
 - The role of a 21st century leaders is getting results and building commitment
 - Be a boundaryless thinker, a network builder, a diplomat, and an interpreter


Strategic Leadership: An Integrated Perspective



Source: **Vicere Associates, Inc.**

Key Elements

Strategic Thinking

- Think Outside-In: 
- Often leaders start by thinking of themselves, then competition, and lastly marketplace
- Strategic thinkers always think from the outside-in and avoid thinking in reverse

Strategic Intent

- Develop a purpose, build a plan, have patience, be persistent
 - Don't only develop a purpose, you must **declare** a purpose
 - Plan with a long-term perspective
 - Focus on corporate core competencies
 - Always evolve

Key Elements (cont'd)

Culture Building

- There are three elements necessary to build culture: Commitment; Competency; Consistency
- Remember, what gets measured is what drives focus, what gets rewarded is what gets repeated

Words of Wisdom

During an interview with Wharton management professor Michael Useem, Sam Palmisano discusses the sale of the company's personal computer business, the PricewaterhouseCoopers acquisition, how a big company can encourage innovation, and what he learned from his mentors, among other observations drawn from almost 40 years at IBM.

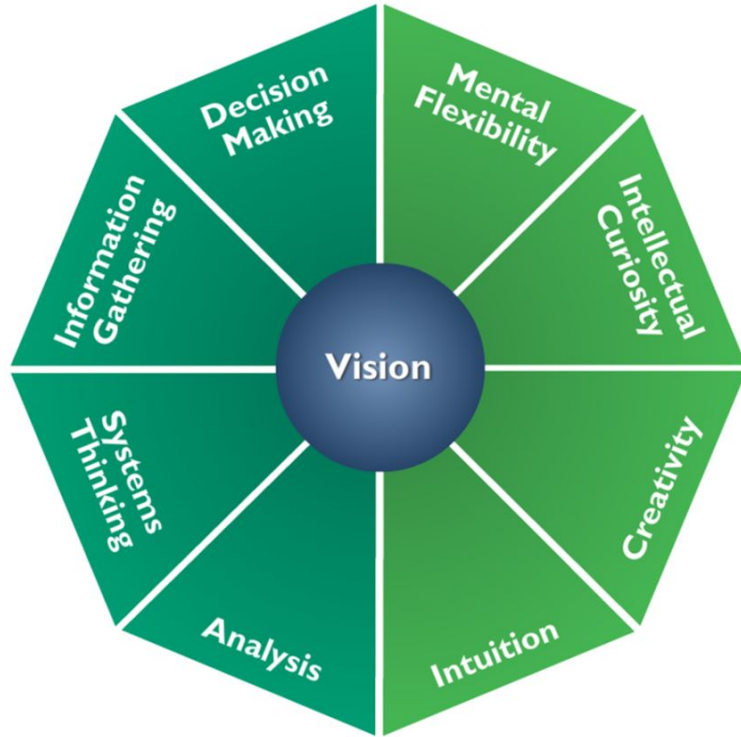
- Watch the video to learn more: [Sam Palmisano Interview](#)

Strategic Thinking

Now that we have seen the big picture, let's dig a bit deeper into element one.

The FMI Strategic Thinking Model

Strategic Thinking



The FMI Strategic Thinking Model includes eight different components, all influenced by the individual or organizational vision.

Source: **FMI Management Consulting**

Breaking Down the Model

Mental Flexibility

- Learning how to “roll with the punches”
- This involves accepting your behavioral history, identifying places where you can compromise, practicing flexible actions, setting goals, rewarding the wins and set-backs, and learning that failure is functional
- Mental flexibility can be developed by:
 - Changing the context
 - Trying something new
 - Questioning your initial reactions
 - Being spontaneous with purpose, and
 - Thinking in deliberate as well as unfocused ways

Breaking Down the Model

Intellectual Curiosity

- Ask “why” ([the 5 Whys Method](#) from MindTools)
- This involves exploring, analyzing, and evaluating to get beyond the first layer or two of answers
- Intellectual curiosity can be developed by:
 - Taking a set amount of time each day to investigate some new issue or topic
 - Setting aside time to question random aspects of the world
 - Learning both sides of a story that you think you have already made a decision about

Breaking Down the Model (cont'd)

Creativity

- Thinking “out of the box”
- Being creative often involved immersing yourself in a problem, looking broadly for connections, letting your ideas incubate, having a breakthrough, and piloting one or two of your ideas
- Creativity can be developed by:
 - Gaining deep expertise
 - Taking risks
 - Dedicating time for creative thinking, and
 - Working to overcome negative attitudes and fear
- Try the [Six Thinking Hats technique](#), a framework that can be used to inspire creativity from de Bono
 - NOTE: this tool has been adapted for use at UC Berkeley and can be found on page 68 of our [Team Building Toolkit](#))
- Learn more by viewing this course on [Creative Problem Solving](#)

Breaking Down the Model (cont'd)

Intuition

- “Reading your gut”
- This involves a set of non-conscious cognitive and affective processes, the outcome of which is often difficult to articulate and is not based on deliberate thinking
- Intuition works in an associative manner: it feels effortless (even though it does use a significant amount of brain power) and it’s fast
- Because intuition stems from the brains ability to pick up patterns, it is often thought of as a domain-specific ability that gets better with practice, so offering people chances to gather deep learning about a topic and time to practice quick thinking can often be used to further develop the skill

Breaking Down the Model (cont'd)

Analysis

- “Reading” a situation
- This involves ones ability to carefully study something to learn about it
- Analytical skills can be improved by taking the time you need to observe a situation, paying very strict attention to what’s going on around you and internally reporting it back, and reflecting on an experience the day after it happens to try to remember the details
- This trains your brain to start to think of things in a formal, analytical way

Breaking Down the Model (cont'd)

Systems Thinking

- Understanding the pieces
- This involves a holistic approach to analyzing a situation that focuses on the way all of the parts interact with and impact each other
- A great overview of systems thinking is outlined by Daniel Aronson in his short white paper titled [“Overview of Systems Thinking”](#)

Breaking Down the Model (cont'd)

Information Gathering

- Getting in the “know”
- An effective information gathering strategy should follow a defined procedure:
 - Analyze the problem
 - Identify the search area
 - Plan the search activities
 - Adapt the search methodology to the appropriate, available tools
 - Carry out the search
 - Review of the records kept during the entire process
- Information gathering skills can be strengthened by establishing a clear focus, intentionally exploring diverse information sources, and staying flexible enough to accommodate different search tools and unexpected results

Breaking Down the Model (cont'd)

Decision Making

- Pushing go!
- An effective decision making strategy should follow a defined procedure as well:
 - Listing possible solutions or options
 - Setting a time scale and assigning responsibility
 - Information gathering
 - Weighing risks
 - Deciding what's important
 - Weighing the pros and cons of each action
 - Making the decision
- Decision making skills are often developed through knowledge and practice. Take the [How Good is Your Decision-Making Quiz](#) to learn more about your competency and style.

Six Habits of Successful Strategic Thinkers

Anticipate

- Don't just look directly ahead, look for and act on ambiguous signals
 - Look for game-changing information at the periphery of your industry
 - Search beyond the current boundaries of your business
 - Build wide external networks to help you scan the horizon

Think Critically

- Question everything, don't just accept the safe opinion
 - Reframe problems to get to the root causes
 - Challenge current beliefs and mindsets, including your own
 - Uncover hypocrisy, manipulation, and bias in organizational decisions

Source: Inc.com

Six Habits of Successful Strategic Thinkers (cont'd)

Interpret

- Synthesize information from many sources before developing a viewpoint
 - Question prevailing assumptions and test multiple hypotheses simultaneously
 - Seek patterns in multiple sources of data
 - Encourage others to do the same

Decide

- Avoid “analysis paralysis”
 - Carefully frame the decision to get to the crux of the matter
 - Balance speed, rigor, quality and agility, sometimes leaving perfection behind
 - Take a stand even with incomplete information and amid diverse views

Source: Inc.com

Six Habits of Successful Strategic Thinkers (cont'd)

Align

- Foster open dialogue, build trust and engage key stakeholders
 - Understand what drives other people's agendas
 - Bring tough issues to the surface, regardless of how uncomfortable it makes you
 - Assess risk tolerance and follow through to build the necessary support

Learn

- Seek out honest feedback
 - Encourage and exemplify honest, rigorous debriefs to extract lessons
 - Shift course quickly if you realize you're off track
 - Celebrate both success and (well-intentioned) failures that provide insight

Source: [Inc.com](https://www.inc.com)

Approaches to Develop Strategic Thinkers

Immersion

- Provide opportunities for total immersion into an area or task in order for the individual to master the core dynamics of each new situation
- Having a thorough understanding of the situation is essential to successful strategic thinking

Apprenticeships

- Work closely with experts in apprenticeship-like relationships in order to learn from those who have already mastered the skill
- The learning that comes from watching someone who has mastered a skill will quickly build your skill and confidence

Simulations

- By participating in active learning situations that use simulations, individuals can be placed in “manageably complex” environments in order to safely experiment and gain insight into cause-effect relationships
- This insight is crucial in developing strategic thinking skills

Source: **Harvard Business Review**, 1

Approaches to Develop Strategic Thinkers (cont'd)

Game Theory Training

- Game Theory is the study of “games” involving intelligent actors with conflicting interests who can make moves and countermoves that yield specific potential payoffs
- Similar to simulations, these games are another form of active learning and practicing new skills within low risk situations
- Learn more by taking this course on [Game Theory](#)

Case-based Education

- Like Game Theory training and simulations, case-based education is an active learning technique that cause the learner to reflect on the experiences presented in case study write-ups in order to absorb the lessons and practice translating decisions made in the case to their real life situations

Cognitive Reshaping

- Doing mental exercises that create new habits of mind
- Many of the techniques mentioned previously are designed to do this, reshape your thinking

Source: **Harvard Business Review**, 1

What Can Mgmt Do to Foster Strategic Thinking

- Encourage your team to set a regular time aside for strategic planning (alone and in meetings with others)
- Provide information to your team on the market, the industry, customers, competitors, and new technologies that influence your business
- Keep your team informed on what is happening internally
- Connect members of your team with mentors
- Communicate a well-articulated philosophy, mission, and goal statement throughout your team, unit, and department
- Reward people for evidence of thinking, not just reacting
- Promote a future perspective for employees by incorporating it into training and development programs
- Teach people what strategic thinking is and encourage them to ask “why” and “when” questions

Source: **Harvard Business Review**, 2

Resources

Quoted Resources

- [Vicere Associates, Inc.](#)
- [Sam Palmisano Interview](#)
- [FMI Management Consulting](#)
- [The 5 Whys Method from MindTools](#)
- [Six Thinking Hats Technique from de Bono](#)
- [UCB Team Building Toolkit – page 68](#)
- [Creating Problem Solving](#)
- [Overview of Systems Thinking](#)
- [How Good is Your Decision-Making Quiz](#)
- [Inc.com](#)
- [Harvard Business Review, 1](#)
- [Game Theory](#)
- [Harvard Business Review, 2](#)

Additional Resources

- [Korn Ferry – Strategic Mindset](#)
- [Three Keys to Improving Your Strategic Thinking](#)
- [Model Thinking](#)
- [Strengthen Your Strategic Thinking Muscles](#)
- [UC Berkeley Transferable Skills Library – Critical Thinking](#)
- [UC Berkeley Transferable Skills Library – Strategic Planning](#)
- [LinkedIn Learning](#)
- [CEB Gartner](#)
- [NCCI](#)
- [Berkeley People Mgmt Program](#)
- [BPM: Executive Coaching Program](#)
- [UC Berkeley Executive Education](#)

My Action Plan

Now that you have completed this course, make an action plan containing both action items that you will do back on the job to develop your strategic leadership and strategic thinking skills. Be sure to include a time frame, to help hold yourself accountable for doing what you plan.

Action Item	Time Frame
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	