



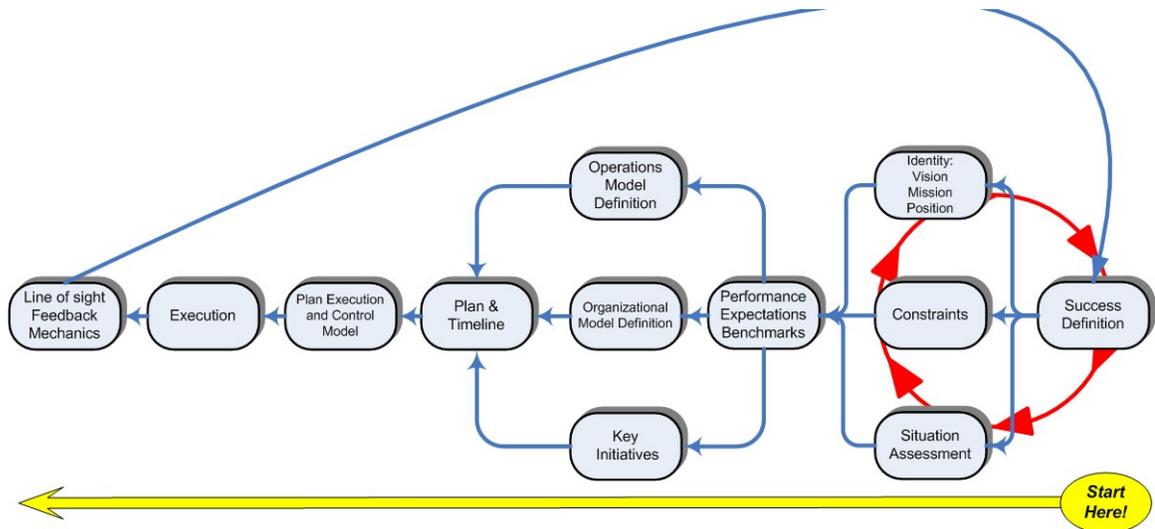
Management Concepts Series – 2010

** Common-Sense Guidelines for Successful Organizations **

Management Concept #6 The Yellow Brick Road <i>Thinking Right to Left – Starting at... the Beginning</i>	
<p>Active Management Pillar Applicability</p> 	<p>Dorothy knew she wanted to go back to Kansas. That was the right-hand side of her page. Everything she did along the way was based on that objective. Along the way she learned, changed, and grew. She was heroic in her determination and focus. Glinda advised her that the best place to start is at the beginning.</p> <p><i>Listen! Right to Left thinking. Left to Right Action</i></p> <p>We have discussed the concept of the universal requirements for managing to success: Identity and Definition of Success. This Management Concept places these components in a larger framework and reminds you there are no shortcuts. If you want to reach your destination, you will need to take the first step, and then the second, and then the third. . .</p> <p>You will need to keep putting one foot in front of the other and the very best place to start is at the beginning.</p>

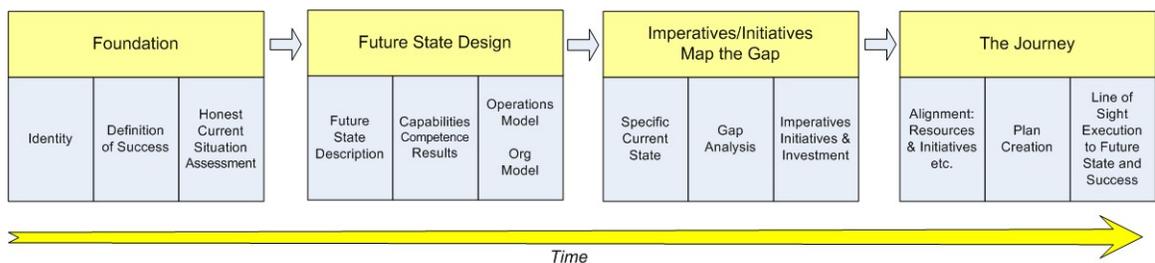
Job 1: Right to Left Thinking

Thinking should always be in a right-to-left context. Once you understand the right-hand side of the page, (AKA: Definition of Success) all of the remaining stuff is nuts and bolts.



Job 2: Left to Right Action

Your actual success is driven by the discipline of taking the Right-to-Left thinking from above and executing the ideas in a predictable and logical manner. Below are the high points of a rough-and-ready “get there” process.



It is a temptation to jump straight to the organizational model (“Okay. . . who wants to do what!?!”) or selection of initiatives (“Let’s buy this new CRM system !”). Don’t do it! Move swiftly and deliberately through an effective process. Don’t let yourself get stuck in planning paralysis, but don’t create a new org structure or implement a new multi-million dollar piece of software to solve a simple operational people management issue. Figure out the real problem and act with deliberate speed.

Right to Left Thinking

When used effectively, planning and execution processes have a few consistent characteristics. At the highest level, a few indicators that will tell us if our planning is likely to result in success for our organization:

1. Do we have an understanding of the definition of success?
2. Do we know who we are? What are our identity and our mission?
3. Does the strategic plan drive us to manage to result? Does it drive our activities to a line of sight with our definition of success?

In order to succeed, we will need to begin our journey by thinking about where we want to go. The concept of right-to-left thinking is used to illustrate this. The illustration above provides a visual representation of this concept.

This illustrates the need to understand where we are going before we begin to design and deploy projects or initiatives.

Note: Strategic plans, tactical plans, and operational requirements are all necessary for an effective planning and execution process. They are interdependent and attempting to plan or move on one without the others will create an out of balance situation and has high risk. This will be discussed at length in a future Management Concept publication.

Left to Right Action

The result of this approach is a process that resolves into major phases or steps. These phases are:

1. Foundation
2. Future State Design
3. Map the Gap: Imperatives and Initiatives
4. The Journey

Again, the illustration above provides a visual representation of this concept.

Foundation

The foundational items are the context within which we build the plan and achieve success.

Identity and Definition of Success

These are both leadership issues. They tell us who we are, what we are trying to be and how we will know whether we are succeeding or not.

Current Situation Assessment

This is the environment in which we exist. It is largely factual in nature (though not entirely as perception and management are occasionally not the same). We must understand where we are as an organization, what we are capable of, and what factors impact, constrain, or facilitate our success.

Future State Design

In this phase we describe the state which our organization must achieve in order to fulfill the requirements of our identity as well as fulfilling our definition of success. The primary components are:

1. **Description of Future State.** This is a general description, almost an elevator speech of what we are and how we look
2. **Capabilities/Competencies/Results.** This is a much more detailed description of the things we will be capable of, excellent at, and what we are actually achieving in our future state. At this point we determine and triage for organizational Critical Success Factors and Imperatives.
3. **Operations Model.** How do we operationally achieve this? Are we a builder of our product or an acquirer and consolidator? As a builder, we need certain operational structures. As a consolidator, we need very different operational capabilities and structures.
4. **Organizational Model.** Based on the operations model, what is the optimal organizational structure to achieve our goals? Do we need an organization with carpenters and programmers or do we need contract specialists and vendor managers? What organizational structure supports our operations model?

Map the Gap

In this phase we clarify the gap between where we are and where we have chosen to be and we identify what will need to happen to bridge that gap.

1. **Specific Current State.** In terms our future state capabilities, competencies, and results, where are we now? This is a more specific and detailed look at the current state and will allow us to define and quantify our required initiatives and activities.
2. **Gap Analysis.** We determine how big a bridge we need to build
3. **Imperatives, Initiatives, Investments.** We come to understand the things we will need to do in terms of specific goals and objectives and the programs, projects, etc. that will be necessary to bridge the gap. We also prioritize and discover the critical threshold level for success as defined above.

The Journey

In this phase we get down to the nuts and bolts of how we make it happen.

1. **Alignment of Resources.** We align our available resources to the work we need to get done. We will probably not have enough money or people to do everything at once. We make decisions regarding resource based execution. The standard triad of time, cost, and quality will be utilized heavily in this step combined with dependencies and urgency. Some hard decisions may be required in this step.
2. **Plan Creation.** We develop the actual mechanics of the plan
3. **Line of Sight Execution.** We implement the plan with the necessary metrics and monitoring tools to assure continual and active steering and connection to our desired end state. Success here depends on good governance practices, commitment, and accountability throughout the organization.

And there you go. . .

It's actually a fairly straight forward process. It isn't, however, easy. The key ingredient of success is your organization's decision to make it happen and your commitment to follow-through.

About Agovia Consulting

Agovia is your partner in crafting common-sense plans, execution governance, and management practices that are laser-focused and, by design, create your results and your success. We help you solve your problems today and help assure your success tomorrow through management practices built on outcomes, results, and achievement.

Managing to Success

Success requires the alignment and coordination of many factors. Enterprises must be competent at, not only the elements of their core mission, they must also have the ability to create and maintain the infrastructure that surrounds and supports that mission.

What We Do

Agovia is a management consulting firm. It's what we do. Picture us a management fitness coach. We help you develop and strengthen the skills you need to succeed. We have provided consultation and solutions to multiple industries including: Information Technology, Insurance, Universities, and Homeless Services. We bring you the support, advice, and driving facilitation that allow you to stop "planning" and start getting results.

Services

- ❖ **Positioning for the Win**
- ❖ **Identity Development (Mission & Vision)**
- ❖ **Team Effectiveness Coaching**
- ❖ **Strategic and Tactical Planning**
- ❖ **Planning and Governance Training**
- ❖ **Organization Turn-Around**
- ❖ **Retreat Facilitation**
- ❖ **Runaway Project Services**
- ❖ **Problem Solving – A Cultural Effective Approach**
- ❖ **Conflict Mediation**
- ❖ **Team/Function Start-Up**

Trust yourself

Experience tells us that most of the time you do know what you are doing. You are the expert in your core domain area. The challenges businesses often encounter are nuts & bolts issues: organization, clear vision, discipline, management infrastructure, and communication. Sometimes you just need a catalyst.

We can help.

We listen.

We pay attention.

We work with you

