



## Stovall Grainger Modleski Inc.

*Partners in Building Competitive Immunity®*

### Are You Achieving Your Objectives?

How are your objectives tracking for this year? Are you on target to achieve them? This is probably a good point in time, if you haven't been doing so all along, to look at your objectives for the year. Are you seeing strong progress, or are you beginning to worry about your ability to deliver?

Winston Churchill once said: "Strategy can be a beautiful thing, but occasionally we must look at our results." If the results aren't there...well then either the strategy is poor or the execution is suffering.

Being involved in this "strategy stuff" with our Building Competitive Immunity® workshop and other services for over 20 years, we are sometimes asked whether or not the "BCI®" process really works. The BCI® process is about understanding, developing, communicating, and executing STRATEGY. And strategy is not theory. It is a science of discovering and advancing your winnable positions. So, if you are really using the "BCI®" approach, then I would bet that you are achieving your objectives!

#### **Strategy isn't easy**

Creating and executing strategy is, however, not an easy thing to do. This is especially true when sales and marketing organizations or individuals are mired in a tactical paradigm. Those tactical paradigms usually say that activity at the field level must always remain grounded in the typical formula of highly directed actions with very little relevant or unique local terrain knowledge.

Your customers tell us that to gain access to time and dialogue with them; you must be willing to understand the "bigger picture" issues

that challenge them. But the old paradigm tells us that every encounter with a customer must be strictly product focused with little room for dialogue beyond the technical or clinical realm.

#### **Terrain Knowledge must include two unique insights**

Yet strategy is not complete without a thorough knowledge of ***self, other, and terrain.*** And for Strategists, this terrain knowledge includes two key pieces of information regarding the customer...

- 1) What are the critical success factors for influencers at all levels of the customer organization?
- 2) What is the customer's strategy?

One cannot gain this kind of information without having a **higher-level of access and dialogue** with customers. If you and your team are not comfortable with a higher level approach, a few things become imperative:

1. Recognizing the vulnerability associated with not having access at all levels; especially when competitors do.
2. Realizing the need to develop skills necessary for higher level access.

Michael Porter in his recent, book "Redefining Health Care," says that sales forces should

"...understand far better the nature of the practices of the physicians they call on..." He goes on to say that sales people need to have "...more substantive physician relationships [enabling





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them] to add more value to each clinician's practice." It is ironic that this is exactly what we continue to hear when we work in the field with your customers. They want you to understand the bigger picture issues they face, and, honestly, if you don't, then your competitors will. Now is the time to gain that first mover advantage and take the initiative to have a deeper understanding of our customers' needs...a more in-depth dialogue which can lead to more effective strategies and more compelling product positioning.

For organizations to excel in this dynamic marketplace, they must be willing to break the old paradigms and look for better ways to differentiate themselves and their products.

*"The essential element of successful strategy is that it derives its success from the differences between competitors with a consequent difference in their behavior. Ordinarily, this means that any corporate policy and plan which is typical of the industry is doomed to mediocrity. Where this is not so, it should be possible to demonstrate that all other competitors are at a distinct disadvantage." -- Bruce Henderson*

### Strategy alone is not sufficient

There is a level of strategic understanding called "schooled in the operational art." At this level, one may have an understanding of objectives, strategy, and tactics, and be able to write an excellent strategic plan, but fail to put the plan into action. The planning process becomes an academic exercise.

It is said that General George McClelland was one of these individuals. He developed a highly trained army, but was very tentative about taking them into action. At one point President

Lincoln said "it is obvious that General McClelland does not want to take the army into war, but perhaps he would allow me to borrow his army and do so."

As a strategist, do you clearly communicate objectives? Are you focused with your strategies? Do those strategies come from a deep knowledge of self, other, and terrain? Do your tactics support the strategies? If so, then "...take a look at the results?" And if the results aren't there, then something is either wrong with the strategy or the execution.

### It comes down to execution

During their first year of existence as a professional football team, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers were led by the colorful former successful college coach John McKay. At the

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*What are the Critical Success Factors for influencers at all levels of the organization?  
What is their Strategy?*

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end of a game and a long, losing season, Coach McKay was asked by a reporter what he thought of the team's execution that day. McKay answered: "I think that's an excellent idea!"

Execution is key to achieving your objectives. If the results are not there, then perhaps there is a problem with execution. Maybe not as dramatic as Coach McKay's definition would suggest, but in some instances changes do need to be made. There are studies that show that poor management leads to significant costs for organizations. And there are individuals (like General McClelland) who may just not be able



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to make that strategic move. They have the ability, but not the willingness.

We must look at ourselves and determine if we are executing strategy, and if we are setting the proper expectations at all levels of the organization for what we expect to be done to advance our winnable positions. If this isn't happening, then perhaps someone else might need to "borrow the army."

At the field level, we can ensure that all we are doing is aligned with the marketing strategy (or strategies) and within compliance guidelines. We must also be executing tactically to connect our winnable positions to what is most important to the



customer...both clinically and professionally. If we don't know at the field level what the customer's clinical and professional objectives are, then our positions will be vulnerable to a competitor who finds this out.

### Competition demands strategy

*"What business strategy is all about; what distinguishes it from all other kinds of business planning - is competitive advantage. Without competitors there would be no need for strategy, for the sole purpose of strategic planning is to enable the company to gain, as effectively as possible, a sustainable edge over its competitors."--Keniche Ohmae*

"BCI®" is just one of our ways of communicating, training, and enlightening individuals and organizations to the power of strategy and effective competitive positioning for products, organizations, and for your personal life. It is not an end unto itself, but a process that must be supported, incented, expected, and put into action for the value to be tangible.

Remember, Strategy is not a theory. It is a science. Your ability to assist in developing, communicating, and executing strategy is what will make you and your organization a winning team in this competitive marketplace.

SGM is Training and Consulting collaborative that *understands the healthcare marketplace* and *knows the power of strategy*. They may be reached at their website: [www.sgbci.com](http://www.sgbci.com)