

**The Thirty Pitfalls of
Strategic and Operational Planning
And How To Overcome Them**

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Introduction:

We have all sat through many strategic planning sessions that have been at best boring, poorly planned and executed, and had no follow-up to all the work that was done at the various sessions. Usually we leave strategic planning sessions frustrated and with less hope for the organization's survival than when we entered the session. Most of these strategic planning sessions are doomed from the outset because the planners have not adequately considered all of the potential pitfalls that could happen.

Recent research¹ into the effectiveness of the strategic planning process in an organization indicates that only 25% of United States companies say they have an effective strategic planning process. Organizations are looking for innovative ways to improve this process since they recognize strategic planning is a necessary element of organizational success. I was able to interview many participants in strategic planning sessions that failed and obtain from them what they felt was the reason for failure. The many reasons for failure have been grouped into like categories designated as pitfalls. Thirty pitfalls are presented in this paper. At the end of this paper is a self-assessment form for you to rate how your organization does today on strategic planning. This self-assessment can also be used as a checklist to plan for effective and productive strategic planning sessions in the future.

If your favorite pitfall is not included, please send it to John W. Moran, 40 Mast Cove Road, Eliot, Maine 03903 or E-mail mastcove@myfairpoint.net and it will be included in a future listing.

¹ Quality Progress, May 1994, page 20.

Pitfall 1: Mix-up

The mix-up occurs when an organization sets out to do planning. Long range planning or financial planning is often substituted for strategic planning. Strategic planning develops the intent of the organization, what it will be, where it is going, and long range planning determines how it is going to get there. Developing the Strategic Intent takes courage since you must stake out the future marketplace and then drive the organization to it utilizing your core competencies. It means understanding key customer requirements and matching organizational capabilities toward meeting those requirements. This is fundamentally different from long range or financial planning.

Frequently management has trouble deciding if they want a breakthrough path for the organization or if they want to tweak a set of operational measures for continuous improvement. Everyone wants and talks "breakthrough" but because of lack of focus or resources settles for small continuous incremental improvements. These small continuous incremental improvements never move or accelerate the organization so it can capitalize on a few big breakthrough gains that would help it leap frog its competition, realize substantial operating results, or develop new and innovative products for market leadership.

The strategic intent and long range planning mix-up also causes us to collect the wrong data to make decisions. Developing the strategic intent requires an ongoing effort to collect information about our marketplace, competition, and economic trends and changes that might shift our consumer's focus and needs. Long range planning to some is to review last year's operating results and then set unrealistic goals that are ten to twenty percent higher without making any changes in the existing infrastructure of the organization. Long range planning tends to keep our planning sights at too low of a level, and we get caught up in the day-to-day reasons why we cannot make change.

Devoting the time and the resources to developing a strategic intent gives the organization a lever that can be used to accelerate its business and marketplace successes. Developing the strategic intent is intended to be a process that involves teamwork on the part of the top executives of the organization and is not designed for individualism. The top of the organization must make fundamental decisions that will set the organization on a course for the future not bounded by the past or current problems or successes.

Pitfall 2: No Linkage

The strategic goals become lost in the middle of the organization. The middle of the organization seems like the “Bermuda Triangle” to many top executives. They know they sent the goals to everyone in middle management, but they seem to have never gotten there.

The strategy and goals sit on the shelf of the middle level executive's credenza with little or no relation to day-to-day operations. It's almost as if middle management greeted the strategy process with a yawn and said, "we'll wait until this phase passes -- it won't have anything to do with us."

The problem is that the middle of the organization has no process to translate the strategy and goals into operational responses. Plans are developed at the top of the organization, but there is no automatic mechanism to deploy them effectively and link them to the processes that will be needed to deliver the results. No real action takes place; it takes longer and longer to get results, and there is frustration at the lack of progress both at the top and the bottom of the organization.

The employees in the organization feel isolated from the decision-making process since they are not able to participate effectively. They hear pronouncements from management that their ideas are valuable and wanted, but no one ever sets up a forum for them to deliver their ideas. At best a brainstorming session is held to see how many ideas can be generated to cut costs, and the department with the most ideas gets an award. These types of input sessions do not allow them to input to the direction of the organization. We tend to do episodic employee involvement on short-term issues and not the long term strategic ones where we really need to cultivate their commitment and ownership.

Developing the ability to deploy strategy and goals effectively to the middle of the organization is a process that requires executives to invest time and energy in communication. Executives need to clearly state and communicate what the goal is and what is expected in return and by when. They need to have a structured deployment process with trained facilitators to assist middle managers in developing their aligned operational plans. Then they need to do regular reviews to insure that the operational plans are aligned and delivering the expected results. Attention to the details of the deployment and review process is what makes the strategy happen and the goals a reality.

Pitfall 3: Data Gathering

Data gathering is usually done at one of the following extremes:

- Too much irrelevant data
- Too little relevant data

In the data-gathering phase, organizations usually gather so much data that no one uses it or so little data that everyone involved in the planning process does not feel comfortable making a decision based on limited information, so they use their experience and opinion. When executives in a planning situation start using their opinion instead of data it often leads to pitfall 24: “OK Corral.”

In our experience the data-gathering phase of strategic planning is a crucial one. One of the principles of Breakthrough Thinking® is Limited Information-Collection² which focuses on determining the purpose the information will serve in the planning process. If we collect reams of market data and then do operational planning or we gather all the performance measures for a strategic planning session and do not find it useful, this is a clear indication that the data collection preceding strategic or operational planning needs to be focused on the purpose of the process or to inform the members of the planning team.

We find too often that data is too old. The data is out of date before it is used. We find executives who have notebooks full of statistics and reports but do not know what to do with it. The best data we have found is that which challenges executives’ opinions. This is usually the data that is overlooked and not utilized because it is controversial. Controversial data delivers the wrong message, not the politically correct one.

The presentation of the data is also a key variable to how useful it will be to a senior executive. Those who collect the information must have a data management strategy in place that effectively translates, consolidates, and communicates the information in a timely manner. The authors have found that the preparation of a briefing book that is well organized with appropriate executive summaries brings the data to life.

² Breakthrough Thinking In Total Quality Management, G. Hoffherr, J. Moran, and G. Nadler, Prentice Hall, 1994, pp. 50 - 52

Pitfall 4: Meeting-Of-No-Purpose

The Meeting-Of-No-Purpose (MONP) happens quite often in organizations and is not exclusively a phenomenon of strategic planning. The Meeting-Of-No-Purpose is not always obvious when it begins but after a short time period someone in the meeting will ask, "Why are we here?" It is then that the Meeting-Of-No-Purpose has officially begun. The Meeting-Of-No-Purpose has no agenda, no designated output, and success can be declared at anytime. Some organizations have a number of individuals who have made a career out of either leading or attending a constant stream of Meetings-Of-No-Purpose. They constantly put out meeting notices to a large group of invitees that are politically correct. They know that most of the top-level invitees will either not attend but ask for a summary memo or have to leave after making an appearance. The professional leaders of Meetings-Of-No-Purpose co-opt their attendees into giving them the appearance of being well connected and important. They do not want their attendees' participation but rather their quick appearance so that they can say to the group, "Sue or Bill are really behind this and want results." In reality Sue and Bill do not have a clue as to why they were invited; it just appeared on their schedule. Sue felt if Bill is going I should attend for a few minutes, and Bill felt likewise.

The Meeting-Of-No-Purpose and pitfall 7 (Wallpapering) are closely aligned. Since there is nothing to do at a Meeting-Of-No-Purpose, we might as well wallpaper the walls with easel paper and pretend that something productive is going on in the meeting. The professional leaders of Meetings-Of-No-Purpose know this type of meeting should not last too long. The meeting should last just long enough for the top executives to appear, show support, and leave. The leader knows that once they have the politics covered, it is time to create a committee to study the ramifications that this meeting has brought forth. Everyone quickly agrees since they want to leave and nominates a lower level person in their area to participate. The leader now has reason for existence for the next few months and then it will be time to call another Meeting-Of-No-Purpose.

The Meeting-Of-No-Purpose is an exercise in futility that happens too often in the strategic planning process. Many false starts occur until someone sets the direction. These Meetings-Of-No-Purpose are a waste of an organization's resources that should be put to more productive use. Meetings-Of-No-Purpose can be eliminated in strategic planning by clearly setting the strategic direction, defining roles and responsibilities of those involved, establishing milestones, and assigning accountability.

Pitfall 5: Roles and Responsibilities

Who does what in the planning process is a problem that we often encounter. Do the planners prepare the plan or provide data? Do the executives prepare the plan with the input of the planners? Not having clear roles and responsibilities helps pitfall 3 (Data Gathering) flourish. If there is no data management strategy in place then we usually collect reams of irrelevant data that are difficult to consolidate and usually have little bearing on the needs of the strategic planners.

Determining who does what in the planning process is key to avoiding confusion and duplication of work. Turf fighting over who controls the planning process only causes further delays in making rapid and timely responses to market changes. Organizations that want to use the strategic planning process as a competitive lever need to establish a clear mandate for intelligence gathering. For the strategic intent setting process we need intelligence about the market place. The intelligence is in the form of quantitative analysis of where the market place is heading; it involves testing scenarios and hypotheses, what if assumptions, and drawing out the experience and thoughts of senior executives about the future. Few organizations ever make the distinction between data and intelligence. Every organization is full of data but usually lacking in the depth of its intelligence-gathering ability.

An organization needs to invest the time and resources in establishing a small data and intelligence-gathering department to support the strategic intent, operational planning, and executive education effort. The purpose of this department is to monitor the economy, social trends, marketplace shifts, competitive position, product development efforts, and the overall performance of the organization. This group should also do selective benchmarking studies to focus on areas needing improvement. This group should prepare and deliver monthly and quarterly executive summaries showing the progress towards the strategy, goal deployment, and results achieved, and highlighting areas needing immediate attention.

Organizations today are under enormous time pressure to respond quickly to resolve critical issues. For example, deciding our future position in the marketplace quickly can help shape the future rather than react to it when it arrives. Being able to accomplish this requires a thorough clarifying of roles and responsibilities concerning data and intelligence gathering so that we can pay attention to the ultimate issue -- the customer and their continued loyalty to our organization's products and services!

Pitfall 6: Involvement

A number of organizations today want to create the illusion that they have a participative structure and involve everyone in the decisions of the organization. What they really want is for everyone to be good soldiers and buy in to the top executive ideas without comment. They do not really want to hear any dissenting opinions.

Both of the authors attended a meeting where a senior executive was to hold a Town Meeting with one of the organization's manufacturing plants. The executive had been overheard in the hallway just before the meeting by a group of employees stating that he had been ordered to do this and just wanted to get it over with. The executive made it seem sincere, but the rumor of what he had said had been circulated to everyone. No one spoke or responded to pleas for questions or concern. The meeting had been scheduled for two hours but was over in forty-five minutes. Everyone was unhappy and mad. Most employees looked upon it as a waste of time since nothing new was heard and the future was beginning to look just like the past. "Do as I say." The senior executive just confirmed his opinion that these people have nothing to contribute, and I will not waste my time in the future doing this type of participative meeting.

Under the guise of open communication and consensus decision making, a chief executive will frequently decide to expand the strategy formulation group beyond his or her own direct reports. Attendees at the strategy work session should be limited to the small group that the chief executive can trust and has given major organizational responsibility. At times there will be an additional individual or two that the chief executive uses as a sage advisor or expert that may be used to counsel the strategy group. These individuals also can be included in the session to provide advice but not to set strategy. The role of these individuals has to be clear since they can sometimes be a disruptive influence to the overall group. In addition, anyone being invited in such a role should be fully briefed so they can make a meaningful contribution.

The purpose of the Strategy Meeting is to create a shared vision of the future among the executive team and not the sage advisors or trusted friends. The executive group then becomes responsible for the deployment of that vision to the rest of the organization and must have complete buy-in to it in order to make for meaningful deployment and attainable results.

Pitfall 7: Wallpaper

Before beginning a wallpaper meeting you must have the following supplies: five new easel chart pads, twenty-five multicolored scented markers with smells that annoy the participants, four large rolls of masking tape, and three uneven easel stands needing repair. The wallpapering process has an activity-based measurement system to determine if it is successful. The success measure is to get as many pieces of easel chart paper posted on every available amount of wall space in the conference room where the meeting is held. From these multiple posted easel chart sheets, prioritized To-Do-Lists are developed, and success is declared. No follow-up ever happens. The next step is to get the easel charts typed and distributed.

You can always tell the leader of a wallpapering meeting in the hallway since they are the one carrying two and a half arm loads of rolled up easel paper with a half a ton of masking tape sticking out in all directions and catching on to anything that it passes by. The leader is constantly dropping one-third of them on the floor while walking back to his office. This leader then goes back to his department and asks an assistant to type them. It usually takes two days to unravel the easel charts and repair the damage done by all of the masking tape. For days we see easel paper hung from the assistant's cubical and littering out to the hallway. For days the assistant tries to figure out if A-4 follows 3-A. Another secret of a wallpapering meeting is that there is no consistent coding process since we are never going to use them anyway.

Finally the leader and the secretary, after wasting 40 hours on this task, have all the easel charts collated, typed, copied, distributed, and filed; they roll up and store the easel sheets. They store this large bunch of easel sheets in a corner of the assistant's cubicle where everyone who enters bumps into them and knocks them to the floor. After eight weeks they are finally disposed of by having maintenance bring a dumpster to the cubicle.

Twenty-three minutes after disposal one of the meeting participants calls and informs the leader of some errors in a few of the pages. "Let's review the easel charts and correct the document. What do you mean you threw them out it? It has only been a few weeks. Well the document has too many errors to be useful. We will just have to call the group together again and redo it." In some organizations this is grounds for justified homicide!

Pitfall 8: Lack of Capable Processes

We often find that when the strategic intent is deployed, the lower level processes are not capable of delivering the operational results required to fund the future needs of the organization. Too often these lower level processes have been neglected for years and lack the appropriate infrastructure, equipment, people skills, aligned systems, and core competencies to develop and deliver the right product and services to the market when required. This inability to deliver on time and when needed to a customer base results in a slowing of the revenue stream to fund the future. This revenue slowdown usually results in further cuts in the lower level process, which continues the erosion of their ability to deliver the needed results. It is a vicious cycle that can be stopped only by focusing an organization on a redesign of its core business systems so they are aligned internally and externally to customer needs and expectations.

In order to do a redesign of an organization's core business systems there is a need to have the strategic intent detailed out sufficiently so the redesign can be planned against it. An organization must clearly state what market it is going to be a player in, the stream of proposed products and services it envisions to be delivering, the timing of those deliveries, and the technology and people skills base that will be required to support the development and manufacturing efforts.

Just redesigning core business systems without the benefit and alignment of the strategic intent is a waste of time and resources. Organizations that start redesign efforts in a vacuum soon fail, and the entire approach is given a bad name. It was not the approach that was at fault; it was starting without a concrete direction to align to. If you do not know where you are going any road will get you there sooner or later. In the early 1990's everyone was jumping on the reengineering bandwagon as the next silver bullet for solving an organization's problems. This reengineering fad did far more damage to organizations than previous management fads since this one tinkered with or changed the major operating systems of the organization. Far-reaching changes were made in an organization's infrastructure without the benefit of a clear focus or direction. Some of these organizations cut their core competencies by mistake, and some used reengineering as a cover for layoffs. The reengineering process is a sound one when it is applied in conjunction with a clear strategic intent to refocus core business competencies.

Pitfall 9: Lack of Aligned Measures

Measurement is rarely considered or mentioned as an essential ingredient of strategy development, deployment, or review. Organizations introduce new strategies and goals to achieve breakthrough performance but continue to use the same old measures to track progress. Seldom do they check and evaluate if the old measures are relevant to the new strategies and goals.

Measures to an observer of the strategic plan should be transparent to the strategic intent. Measures should encapsulate the strategic intent and provide for clarity and reduced confusion at lower organizational levels. This will facilitate alignment of operational plans to support and achieve the strategic intent. Aligned measures will also assist in the review process since it will focus the operational planning, and attainment of results will be obvious. Aligned measures also focus an organization's continuous improvement efforts at the operational level so that they are aimed at those things that can help the strategy and the goals to be achieved and not focused on extraneous issues.

Measurement is sometimes feared since it promotes accountability. Accountability equates to responsibility for actions taken. Responsibility can have both positive and negative consequences associated with it. In the review process there must be a built-in mechanism to reduce the fear associated with measurements. The review process must seek to build up an individual's ability to react quickly to measurement results and put action plans in place to correct any obvious deviations or undesirable trends.

Too frequently we measure things because they are easy to measure rather than because they are important to measure. It is easy to measure the number of sales calls made by a salesperson but more difficult to measure the effectiveness of those calls. Which of these two measures is more important to an organization? We must develop the discipline in managers and employees to seek and use quantitative measures over qualitative measures

Measurement makes things concrete, visible, and difficult to ignore. We must keep reminding ourselves that what gets measured gets managed effectively and efficiently. To manage effectively and efficiently we must measure!

Pitfall 10: Casual Consensus

Consensus is defined as a general agreement or accords that are a compromise of conflicting opinions. Consensus is difficult to achieve at times, but the investment in the time and energy to achieve it is well worth it for strategic planning. Consensus does not mean everyone agrees with every single point. Rather it means we can live with and clearly support the decision since it is best for the organization as a whole.

In many organizations they never achieve real consensus but rather casual consensus. Casual consensus or no real buy-in happens when the senior executives just give lip service to the strategic goals and objectives that they participated in developing. They pretend to agree at the meeting but communicate a different message when speaking to others in the organization or their functional areas of control. This type of senior executive behavior tends to project the image of a rudderless organization - not going anywhere fast. In addition other employees see it has a norm of operation. Agree to anything at a meeting then do as you please afterwards. This type of behavior if not challenged by senior executives tends to lead to a clubby, paternalistic culture that avoids making tough decisions. This type of culture leads to at best a slow pace of change if any. Nothing ever seems to happen in this casual consensus atmosphere; the status quo is the norm, and we seek to maintain it. Sure we may challenge one another occasionally, but we do not have any teeth in the challenge. It's for show only.

It is extremely important that the top few senior executives agree totally and support any strategic goals or statements before they are communicated to the rest of the organization. Buy-in must be obtained at the top before any meaningful deployment activities can begin. Invest the time and energy to obtain the top few senior executives to internalize and totally buy-in to the future direction of the organization.

Pitfall 11: Slick Brochure

Every year top management pronounces seven major strategic statements with eight goals and objectives under each of them. Each of the statements is combined into a slick brochure. The brochure is written in flowery, obtuse language that can be broadly and widely interpreted. The strategies, goals, and objectives are motherhood, God, country, and blueberry pie pronouncements. They are difficult to disagree with but almost impossible to understand and implement. These pronouncements are packaged in a slick and expensive brochure that is distributed to everyone in the organization under the guise of a communication and deployment strategy.

Those who receive the slick brochure either are confused and throw it away or leap to action and use "Pitfall 7: Wallpaper" as their process to make action happen. Meetings are held throughout the organization by the professional wallpaper meeting leaders, involving hundreds of employees trying to figure out what should be done by the message delivered in this exquisite brochure from corporate. To-do-lists are developed, committees are formed, and the allegiance memos begin to flow. Some enterprising senior professional wallpaper meeting leaders even have wall posters made up and hung in strategic locations for all to see and gaze upon in wonder.

You have probably attended a meeting or two in your career that a slick brochure caused to happen. The slick brochure is received in the mail sometimes without a letter of explanation. It may be entitled "The XYZ Corporate Direction, Strategy, and Goals for 20XX." Some in the organization discard it, but others have questions. Surely they would not have spent so much money if there were not a message for us to learn. What do they expect from us? What should I do? How should I show support? Should I mobilize my department? What to do is the key question. The real message is "Do not do anything. We are not doing anything at the top other than sending out the slick brochure. We fulfilled our planning to-do-list."

The slick brochure does not cause deployment by itself. It is a way to market the strategies to the organization. However, effective deployment of the strategy requires management *involvement* and *action*, a topic detailed in other pitfalls.

Pitfall 12: Key Words

Every organization has songwriters who love to attach as many modifiers to a goal statement as possible. These modifiers or jargon blunt any action statements of substance. Strategic goal statements should have an obvious clear intent as to the action that is required to accomplish it. The addition of paraphrases intended to pacify influential parts of the organization usually makes the statement a disconnected group of paragraphs that no one in the organization can understand. There are usually contradictory statements buried within the paragraphs, and management spends a lot of time and effort trying to explain what they meant in the beginning.

The following is a list of Key Words that must be eliminated from any strategic intent, goal, or objective statements since they tend to make them not actionable.

- Alert
- Boundaryless
- Create
- Communicate
- Delaying
- Effective
- Efficient
- Encourage
- Engage
- Enhance
- Establish
- Impact
- Increase
- Independence
- Initiatives
- Introduce
- Leverage
- Maintain
- Manage
- Partner
- Position
- Presence
- Promoting
- Reach
- Recognize
- Reliable
- Respect
- Scoping
- Support
- Sustain

Strategic statements must be clear, bold, inspiring, and above all short and to the point. Strategic statements need to inspire the desired action with no confusion or misinterpretation as to what is wanted.

"Key Words" tend to make weak statements that at best inspire the maintenance of the status quo instead of the desired revolution.

"Key Words" are a natural allies to pitfall 11: The Slick Brochure. They enhance the slick brochure's confusion factor.

Pitfall 13: Failure To Blend Resources Into Core Competencies

The blending of an organization's technology, people, skills, and other resources into a unique combination of market-differentiated products and services is a feat that many organizations do not perform well. This blending when linked and aligned to the strategic intent is a key ingredient for long term growth, profitability, and market leadership.

A business grows and prospers by having core competencies that are hard for the competition to imitate. These core competencies must not be isolated within one single function of the organization but must transcend the entire organization to provide maximum benefit. Core competencies are cross-functional in nature since they transcend individual functions. Core competencies usually are made up of a group of functional specialties that have many hand-offs to each other. Which core competencies to invest in and develop internally and which to outsource is a question that organizations constantly struggle with. We should invest in those that develop a proprietary capability in the organization and outsource those that are generic in the marketplace. In the virtual world of the next century, organizations need to invest in proprietary capabilities to maintain their competitive edge but outsource generic competencies to maintain profitability.

Given that customer expectations are constantly shifting, an organization must be able to identify future customer requirements and align its resources and competencies to meet those needs. It is critical for the strategic plan to identify the gap between future requirements and current capabilities and to determine action steps to fill that gap. As customer needs and expectations shift so must an organization's core competencies.

An organization must be constantly monitoring, assessing, and measuring the efficiency, performance, and impact on the bottom line of their core competencies. Core competencies, like customer needs and expectations, must change over time to meet the needs of the marketplace, and successful organizations will be the ones that have appropriate monitors in place to detect the need to change ahead of the competition in the marketplace. The assessment and monitoring process keeps an organization alert to the shifts in the market place and protects it from market place insensitivity.

Pitfall 14: Lack Of Review

The word "Review" in most organizations is equated to fear, fear of punishment for results not achieved. Reviews are usually not pleasant experiences. Think of the many reviews you may have been subjected to over the years. The annual medical review, a tax review, a performance review, a fitness for duty review, a mid-term school review, and so on. We had fear in each one of them since we knew something would be said or discovered that would indicate we were headed for trouble or a discomfoting experience. What we feared in these reviews as individual participants was reprisal for action taken or not taken. Usually the reviewer or senior management does not find the review process pleasant either since they chastise often and recognize seldom.

The purpose of "Review" should be to develop mutual agreement between management and process owners around objectives, goals, action, alignment, and timing. The current review process must be reengineered so it is one that is constantly providing clarity from the top to the bottom of the organization on:

- Expectations
- Objectives
- Achievements

This process of continuous clarity has an end result in developing a clear and concrete contract between management and process owners for the achievement of substantial bottom line results.

An effective review process allows senior management the opportunity to display the following exceptional traits of a great leader:

- Coaching
- Teaching
- Encouraging
- Empowerment
- Role Modeling
- Following Through
- Mentoring
- Challenging

Review is an integral part of insuring that aligned goals and objectives are achieved as rapidly as possible so that their benefit can be realized quickly.

Pitfall 15: No Way To Achieve It

Many organizations lack a disciplined deployment process to ensure that operational goals are aligned to the strategic goals and deliver the agreed to results. The lack of a disciplined deployment process leaves a void in an organization for operational units to determine how they can contribute to the strategic intent of the organization. A disciplined deployment and review process helps build commitment to direction and results.

The following four scenarios show what can happen when the strategic intent and deployment processes interact:

- If the strategic intent of the organization is focused and clear but the organization has an ineffective deployment process, paralysis sets in, and no action results.
- If the strategic intent is unfocused and the deployment process is ineffective, there is a lot of wandering and drifting at lower levels. There are a lot of unanswered questions, and each operating unit will take a different direction to further compound the misalignment.
- If the strategic intent is unfocused but the deployment process is effective, there tends to be a lot of functional focus and a lot of the same old, same old plans. This scenario tends to promote the status quo and the functional stovepipes.
- If the strategic intent is focused and the deployment process is effective then an organization will experienced focused and aligned change. The organization as a whole will experience acceleration in its attainment of its goals and objectives.

In order to reduce the confusion in lower levels of an organization and speed up the acceleration of goal attainment, it is imperative that an effective deployment process must be supported by a focused strategic intent. The effective deployment process is one that has a few well thought-out process steps that guide an organization's actions to goal alignment. It must make provisions for corporate goal translation into local language and structure appropriate process improvement actions to achieve the goal.

Pitfall 16: Alzheimer's

Alzheimer's infects an organization when the top executives develop a short or long-term case of amnesia. These executives become clueless as to what are the core competencies of their business. They forget what business they are in and expand into areas in which they have no expertise or experience. There are many examples over the past ten years of organizations expanding into businesses foreign to their core competencies and then closing or selling these ventures at a loss a few years later.

Sony's heartaches in Hollywood⁴ is a good example of putting dreams in charge of the bank account and throwing money at things and hoping it will grow into a core competency. Usually the Alzheimer's pitfall has one overarching cause, aside from patently inept management; it is the nearly incredible reality that senior executives too often do not understand the fundamentals of their business⁵. "They neglect to ask central questions, such as what precisely is their company's core expertise, what are reasonable long- and short-term goals, what are key drivers of profitability in their competitive situation. A lot of senior people at very large companies have no idea what made their organization successful⁶."

The Alzheimer's pitfall is not usually a one time phenomenon but can be repeated many times in an organization that does not have the discipline to learn from its mistakes. Too often senior management jumps from disaster to another waiting to happen. Until an organization takes the time and energy to uncover its core competencies it will never know where the gold is buried in the organization. Once we understand our strengths then it is time to set the direction for the future. We must constantly monitor the assumptions on which the future direction was based to catch any fundamental change that would cause us to make a mid-course correct. We can not be complacent after we set the future strategic intent. We must monitor, communicate, and update that intent to our employees on a regular basis and not at the last minute when the bottom falls out of the plan.

Employees assume management has Alzheimer's when the only time they hear from them is as a disaster is unfolding, and we all need to participate in boat bailing and a life boat drill.

⁴ Sony's Heartaches In Hollywood, Business Week/December 5, 1994, p. 44.

⁵ Why Companies Fail, Fortune, November 14, 1994, p. 52.

⁶ Ibid, p. 52

Pitfall 17: Details First

Agreeing on details before deciding the main points happens occasionally when there is no strategic thinking involved. We tend to focus on the fix for a problem before we truly understand the root cause of it. We constantly come across organizations that have had hundreds of team-based improvements that really did nothing to enhance the long-term competitive position of the organization. These team-based improvements just made today a little more tolerable.

Before any organization begins to tinker with improvement, it must set a clear direction upon which criteria for success can be drawn. Individuals and teams in an organization need criteria of success to judge which of the many actions they could take to make daily work improvements that are the best suited and aligned to achieve the strategic direction of the organization.

Letting everyone figure out the details in the absence of a strategic direction is a recipe for disaster. There will be many conflicting improvements, some of which may even cost more than they save. Most of the improvements that come in a “details first atmosphere” are ones that are sub-optimum. They maximize a gain in one area at the expense of the organization as a whole.

In addition, in a “details-first atmosphere” many of the team-based or individual improvements recommended to management never get acted upon since management does not know which are the right ones to approve. Employees never hearing back on recommendation become disillusioned and resist any further attempts to involve them in making improvements.

Management should not expect great strides to be made in making an organization better at every level if they walk the talk of quickly finding a solution for every problem. Management must set the direction clearly for the future and then carefully craft a set of evaluation criteria that everyone in the organization can use to judge the worthiness of a proposed improvement. Improvement areas selected with criteria that tie it to the long-range needs of the organization will be readily received by all levels of management. Implementation of this type of improvement project is easier since there is a benefit to the whole and not just one part of the organization.

Pitfall 18: Lack of Due Diligence

The lack of due diligence occurs when we try to rush through the necessary step of the strategic planning process by rushing and skipping steps and people's inputs in order to quickly craft a plan for a high level meeting. Under the guise of urgency we rush through to develop a plan that usually leaves its audience bewildered and trying to unravel all of the inconsistencies and contradictions.

The lack of due diligence happens when an organization does not view the strategic planning process as a core business process. By not viewing it as a core business process it tends to ignore the fact that the strategy drives the organization. Treating strategic business planning as a core business process requires an investment in time and resources to operate and fund the activity correctly. The strategic business planning process must be seen as a core process that has critical process levers that are focused on driving the organization to achieve competitive advantages.

By viewing strategic business planning as a critical core process we must subject it to the same measurement and standards that we impose on other critical processes. Work with the strategic business planning process must be performed efficiently and effectively. There must be a process of continuous improvement in place that constantly makes the process more responsive to the organization's needs. The strategic business planning process can be a value-added support process if it has a clearly defined process that all can view and provide input to at the appropriate time.

One of the first improvements in an existing strategic business planning process is to insure that input and comments are gathered throughout the organization in an efficient manner. The strategic business planning process owners should focus on developing a simple process of communication, input, and feedback for the organization to use. They should communicate the first draft of the plan and the supporting assumptions to a series of focus groups at the next level and ask for input. The input should be consolidated and reviewed by senior management, and decisions should then be made regarding modification of the draft plan. Then feedback sessions should be held with the original input groups to show the modifications and why certain suggestions were or were not used. Then the process can be repeated at other levels as required. This will insure that due diligence has been achieved. This process also has a side benefit in that it develops ownership for the plan early on.

Pitfall 19: Hobby

Every year we go off to a one-week retreat in a really nice conference center, play golf and tennis, discuss the previous year, and agonize over making and setting goals that we will never keep for the next year. “I have been here ten years, and it is a yearly event, and I would not miss it.” We have a staff of three people almost full-time to coordinate the golf and tennis games and of course disseminate the important strategic information we generate and analyze. We do it every year and get no real return for the effort, but I have taken two strokes off my handicap over the past two planning meetings. By the time I retire I will be ready for the senior tour.

If this type of yearly planning meeting scenario seems familiar, it means you are not treating your strategic business planning process as a critical process component in your organization. It has become more of a hobby and recreation process than an integrated planning effort that provides real value to the organization. Goals and objectives are set, but no one really believes in them, and no one is going to do anything about them.

Organizations spend a small fortune every year going through such a process in the name of planning. The hobby pitfall is a natural breeding ground for pitfall 4: The Meeting-Of-No-Purpose, pitfall 6: Involvement, pitfall 10: Casual Consensus, and pitfall 18: Lack of Due Diligence. The hobby mentality approach to strategic business planning sends a powerful message to the organization that the senior executives are not serious about any real change taking place.

Employees in an organization with the hobby approach to strategic business planning soon learn to recognize the yearly signs that the annual rite has begun. Plane reservations for exotic places are made; questions abound such as “can we take our spouses this year?” Hurried meetings are called to develop a show-and-tell slide presentation to be used at the annual planning meeting. Pronouncements such as “We are limited to five overheads - How will we tell them about all our accomplishments” are commonplace. In reality they are glad they are limited to five overheads since they will be a stretch to fill anyway. All these presentations are put into a giant binder for each participant. Unfortunately these binders only wind up gathering dust and do very little to inspire action of any type.

Pitfall 20: Falling in Love

Some organizations fall in love with the planning process and make it a year-round event. We can never gather enough marketplace data or enough customer feedback or too much employee input. We mail out surveys daily and agonize over the response rates. Some customers receive two to three surveys a week from us on a whole range of topics from many different functions in the company. Organizations that keep gathering data usually do not want to make a decision. We put off the tough decision with the false excuse that we need more information. Organizations like this become mesmerized with information. The result is that the strategic business planning process never concludes.

Organizations that use this type of approach have great information data gathering systems but lack a processing system for the data to go through. Assumptions must be drawn, goals must be set, and decisions must be made in a robust strategic business planning process. There must be a logical outcome to the yearly process. If an organization has a weak data processing system then it must build that capability to analyze data or they will bury themselves in reams of information that will not help them. If your current planning department keeps asking for more space, then this is a sure sign that pitfall 20 is alive and well in your organization.

We have all heard the old expression “Data rich and information poor.” Robust strategic business planning processes have an advanced analytical process to digest all of the information that comes in so meaningful conclusions can be drawn and acted upon. These conclusions need to be communicated to top management on a regular basis with an analysis of trends and summaries of key findings. This type of analytical process makes the planning function a value-added part of the core business process.

We must treat information as a critical organizational asset. We should demand that we receive a return on our investment and be insured that the information process is bottom line oriented. The top executives of any organization must take information management very seriously since it can help reduce risk associated with major decisions, support decisions at all levels in the organization, guide the improvement of core work processes, and help accomplish the strategic plan of the organization. If their current information systems are not providing useful and actionable information then it is time to reengineer that process.

Pitfall 21: Nightmare on Elm Street

We are all familiar with Freddy Kruger and how he always appeared in someone's dream to cause havoc and destruction. This can also happen when a Freddy takes on the role of middle managers in the deployment process and then the dream set forth in the strategic intent turns to horror as the deployment process begins. Pitfall 21 is supported and enhanced by Pitfall 22 - Rhythm and Blues.

We find in most organizations that there are many enemies within it that have severe hostility towards any process that will upset the status quo. They go out of their way to wreck any good planning and deployment process because it tends to upset the natural order of things that they have established and enjoy. Most deployment processes are designed to question each aspect of an operation against the established corporate goals. This questioning process may show weaknesses that some operational managers would rather overlook. To overcome the questioning process, they search for any possible way to derail the deployment process.

The Freddy Kruger syndrome is one that the implementers of the deployment process must constantly be on guard for. The early warning signs are:

- No immediate action starts at the operational level once the deployment process is announced.
- Operational managers always have an excuse why they cannot get around to it this week.
- Complaints about the forms, format, and lack of time abound.
- The constant push back on to those who have responsibility to accomplish the deployment. "We are ready when you can send us a trained facilitator to guide us through the process" is a popular push back.

One way around the Freddy Kruger syndrome is to publish a complete deployment schedule with the review dates already set. This sends a strong message to those who would attempt to derail the process. If we know we are going to be reviewed by top management and held accountable then we had better follow the timetable and formats. Top management must use the review process to instill in the operational managers the importance and benefits of the entire strategic business planning and deployment process. The review session should be utilized to continually clarify the strategic intent, the reasons for the goals, and what has already been achieved and how far we have left to go.

Pitfall 22: Rhythm and Blues

General Eisenhower once said, “Planning is great until the shooting starts.” The transformation of the strategic business plan into operational plans is where the shooting starts in most organizations. We expect the operational plans to have a process focus, achievable and aligned goals, and help establish accountability.

Unfortunately smooth deployment of the strategic business plan into aligned operational plans that are focused on achieving the goals of the organization are a rarity in most organizations today. Deployment is the invasion of the strategic business plans throughout an organization. This needs to be a critical sub process of the strategic business planning process. We have seen too many organizations that leave this vital sub process to chance. A vague memo is written as to how to deploy strategic business plans into operational plans. Little follow-up happens, and then everyone at corporate level is surprised when they receive a hundred different types of formats. The different formats do not allow any meaningful roll-up of the various operational plans to see if the corporate goals will be achievable. Usually a second request is initiated to do them over again in a common format. This constant re-doing process develops stress and confusion at the operational level as well as a lack of respect for the executive team who keep making the same requests over and over. A common refrain from operational managers is “Why didn’t they say that the first time?”

A simple and concrete deployment process with clear linkages is a necessity in every organization. The managers at the operational level need guidance on what is wanted, how it is wanted, when it is wanted, and where it is wanted. It is very easy in the operational level of an organization to get so caught up in the in the day-to-reactive process that you never have time to plan properly. Operational managers have even less time to plan if they spend half of the available time trying to figure the what and how of the deployment process.

We must remember that operational planning is just one more add-on to the already overburdened operational manager. If we can make the deployment process one that is clean and efficient then we will obtain the commitment and buy-in that is needed from operational managers to insure success.

Pitfall 23: Static Cling

The static cling pitfall is a phenomenon in organization that has a heavy dose of tradition as its guiding principle. This type of organization has not made an improvement to its business planning process for the past ten to twenty years. Its top management sees little need to invest in new technology or to upgrade the business planning process. They will always say this is the process that got me to where I am today, and it is still a good, sound process. The question you never hear them ask or entertain is “will this process be robust enough to keep me here in the future?”

Senior executives in organizations like the one described above have moved beyond the hobby pitfall and have become so tradition-bound that they cannot change. The business planning process that was so successful for them in the past is now spreading a disease throughout the organization that will lead to their failure. We have all seen the failures of big organizations using a tradition-bound business-planning process in the newspapers over the past few years.

As this process of tradition-bound planning heads into its final stage on the road to complete failure, the employees wonder “is anyone out there?” The organization begins to lose touch with its customers, competitors, shareholders, and worst - their employees. Employees are put in the position of watching the foundations of the business unravel around them while the top management ignores the signs until it is too late. The first round of cut back that takes place in the early stages of collapse usually does not affect those who brought the organization to the edge of the cliff but rather those who were trying to get the message out that the ship was indeed sinking.

Unfortunately tradition-bound planning does not have much of a base to build upon. Organizations coming out of this type of complete planning failure need to start the business planning function as a critical process and focus attention and resources on it until functioning smoothly. Usually this means a good hard shake up of the entire business planning and deployment function to get the juices going again. The bloat and complacency need to be cut out of the old process before any reconstitution is attempted.

Pitfall 24: “OK Corral”

Every planning meeting is like the gunfight at the “OK Corral.” We all stake out our territory and shoot from the hip with no real data to back up our accusations or assertions. We wear any attacker down by a constant barrage of meaningless opinions, and when we are challenged we attempt to table it until we can get more ammunition.

The classic quote to describe this pitfall is “ready, fire, aim.” We keep shooting until our opponent capitulates or it is past 5 P.M. and everyone agrees to a cease-fire.

What is interesting in this pitfall is how fast the sides change during the shoot-out. As soon as my turf is violated I quickly look for an ally, and it could be the one I was ganging up on. One minute I am backing up “Doc Holiday,” and the next minute I have him in my gun sight.

This process also helps provide a sound foundation for pitfalls number 4 (Meeting Of No Purpose) and 10 (Casual Consensus) to flourish.

This meeting has some resemblance to the Wallpapering meeting (Pitfall Number 7) except that there is nothing to type up. No one had time to write anything down since they were too busy reloading their gun, firing, and ducking for cover.

The gun fight at “OK Corral” usually ends with each participant making up a “To-Do-List” of who to get even with and possible areas to find data to discredit someone with. Unfortunately this type of a meeting does nothing to build unity toward any common goals or purpose within the organization. Bitter resentment on the part of some participants can result in hostile internal power struggles that are destructive to an organization. A classic children’s fairy tale “McElligott’s Pool” had an appropriate quote for the results of this process “I am and elephant faithful I never forget.”

Both of the authors have experienced the aftermath of this type of meeting process if it is allowed to exist in an organization. The result is it gets quickly deployed throughout the organization and becomes the norm for conducting business. In addition it has a paralyzing effect on the decision, teaming, and consensus process.

Pitfall 25: The If I's

If I had only done “x” instead of “y” - senior management has a tendency of always second guessing decisions that are made or goals that are set and then changing direction, targets, or measures. This is a sure sign that Pitfall 10 (Casual Consensus) is working in conjunction with this pitfall. This is a very disruptive process to line and staff managers since they usually have just finished communicating the decisions or goals to their direct reports when they are changed. This process also makes senior management look like they are not clear on what they want accomplished or where the business is headed.

Constantly second guessing the decisions or goals that are set sends a strong message to the organization that it is all right to change the goal if the results do not match the needs. To have an effective deployment process an organization needs clear and consistent goal statements that can be deployed with certainty throughout the organization early in the planning cycle. Divisions and departments need to have confidence that the time and energy they are investing in making aligned plans will not be wasted by constant change.

In organizations where constant changing of the goals is common very little deployment ever happens. Lower level managers just do the process once and watch for the change signals and do not respond to them since they will change again. In one organization we are familiar with managers have told us that in some instances they just resubmit the same plan year after year and nobody ever questions them. The one caution they gave us was to have the dates in the current year - do not make it too obvious.

This type of behavior causes the organization not to have capable processes (pitfall 8), resources not being blended into core competencies (pitfall 13), and no way to achieve its desired goals and objectives (pitfall 15). Constantly changing the goals and direction sets the stage for disastrous operating results, missed market opportunities, and employees who become disillusioned and satisfied with the status quo. Employees who become satisfied with the status quo become unable to cope with rapid change and tend to be rigid when flexibility is needed to meet a competitor's threat head on.

Pitfall 26 The Train to “Know” Where

“Too many strategic plans detail how many teams should be established and when they should be formed, but they do not indicate what these teams will be doing. Too many strategic plans call for inflicting hours of training on unsuspecting managers and employees without first answering, “What will all this training do for us, and how will we know if it is working⁷” How many organizations have been duped into setting up elaborate training programs that never returned anything on their investments? “Many thousands of dollars have been spent, and everyone is trained but nothing productive is happening” is a sad commentary for many organizations’ approach to starting a teaming process.

In too many organizations the fact that there was never management commitment, no alignment to the strategic initiatives, and no initial employee input somehow never stopped a major training effort to be undertaken. The rallying cry of “everyone else is doing it,” “our customers require it,” or “our competition is doing it” was all the justification it took for a major outlay of funds that resulted in some slick notebooks and video tapes being purchased. These notebooks and tapes were distributed and shown throughout the organization in three and five day programs and questions that were doubtful were given the answer “We have to let the process work; it may take a while.”

These training programs provided the organization with knowledge, but it was not aligned and directed to get a real return on the investment. No one knew if a return on the training investment dollars was ever achieved because no one wanted to put real measures in place since they were equated with responsibility and accountability. Instead soft measures like number of employees trained, number of teams started, number of classes conducted, and so on were used. Today we have to demand quantitative measures of training dollars spent since we are in a resource-limited environment, and every dollar should be invested wisely.

Training is a necessary ingredient for any successful organization’s long-term success. Training must be focused on and supportive of achieving the organization’s goals and initiatives both short and long-term. Training is an investment in changing behavior, and the change must be directed at the future needs and expectations of the organization

⁷ Focus the Strategy to Achieve Results, G. P. Bohan, Quality Progress, July 1995, pp. 89-92.

Pitfall 27: The Victory Celebration

At the first of even a slight improvement, management quickly declares a huge victory and that the war is won. They celebrate by rewarding each of the top executives with bonuses. However, three months later they realize that the victory celebration was premature and the slight improvement has now turned into a major embarrassing variance. Soon the rank and file realize that last month the free lunch and cake was really not deserved and that the pink slips are not colored paper for the next celebration but rather the result of management's poor judgment.

Management in most organizations does not have the patience necessary to wait for real change to take place. They are so used to a short-term focus and reward structure that the long-term is not something very far in the future. The lack of patience usually leads them to look for any opportunistic sign of success, and this sign does not have to be a very bright sign. What they do not realize is that a declaration of victory is a sign to the employees that they can relax, and this is an opportunity for the resistor to change to regroup forces. During this victory timeframe the resisters quickly look for any possible weakness to point out that this change effort was wrong and the old status quo was right for the corporation. The resisters quickly gain back lost ground and when the victory celebration turns into a defeat it is hard to get the employees motivated to return to the effort. The resisters point out to them that have been misled before and "why should you believe them now?"

Short-term gains should be used to motivate employees to tackle large improvement goals and change issues that can move the organization closer to its vision and desired state.

Pitfall 28: Musical Chairs

We have all seen the major announcements from corporate how this year's strategic planning process will be more efficient, streamlined, and focused on the business we need to be in for the future. With this major announcement comes the names of those on the new team to lead this strategic planning effort. We always notice that this new team is part of the reorganization that was just completed to give the organization a leaner look, but what is new is the titles of the players, nothing more. The same old lead weights that brought us last year's new strategic planning fiasco have just played musical chairs. The same old crew is still there. Once again they have shown their resiliency to survive in the worst of times. Like Pitfall Number 21 - 'The Nightmare on Elm Street' - they are back in our lives and ready to do it again. The worst part is that they are more experienced at screwing it up so the results this year should be spectacular. We can hardly wait for the first draft of the new process.

Leaders in organizations have never learned the lesson that to expect something different out of the same old gang is insanity. You can mix them up, slice and dice, and rotate them but the result is always the same. I wonder why?

We need to bring fresh blood and ideas into the strategic planning and deployment process each year. Leaders have to constantly evaluate their executive team to insure that they are functioning effectively and not just surviving.

Giving a person a new title does not change the way they think, act, and behave. This has to be done through a thorough performance management and planning system. Leaders must identify the shortfalls in their executive team and address them through training, experience, and coaching. Leaders need to prevent ineffective executives from polluting the planning process and detracting from its effectiveness.

Pitfall 29: “Say What”

Many organizations today are having severe difficulty in deploying their strategic plans effectively and in a timely manner. Due to the large scale amount of downsizing and right sizing many organizations have eliminated the core of the middle management team that used to serve as translators of the strategic plan. They could talk “Operational Speakese.” They made sense out of the grand strategic language. These translators played a vital role in the organization, which has been overlooked in the rush to slash and burn. Unfortunately nothing was developed to fill the void left by these individuals.

Many organizations that I deal with are feeling this void as they attempt to roll out their strategic plan. The glossy brochures have been sent out, but nothing is happening. One client recently stated “I never realized how much grease those middle managers put on the strategic plan. They helped get it into our day-to-day language and made it real to the troops.”

To overcome this void, it is imperative that Strategic Realization Workshops be held in the organizational units to help translate the strategic plan into operational plans with defined outcomes and timelines. A conscious effort needs to be made today to support the organization in taking a set of strategic goals and translating them into ongoing aligned operational plans. If top management does not take the initiative to translate to “Operational Speakese” their thoughts and desires then the void will continue to widen, and operational execution mistakes will increase, dragging down the whole organization. We do not want our organization playing the time-consuming game of “What Do You Think They Want.” This is a waste of resources and ultimately leads to pitfalls number 4 - the Meeting-Of-No-Purpose, pitfall number 7 - Wallpaper, and pitfall number 12 - Key Words.

Just like in the foreign movies we need to add the subtitles.

Pitfall 30: Tombstone

This is the last pitfall and by far the most classical. Recently I was with a client reviewing the strategic plan when we uncovered an assumption and a corresponding goal that had changed due to the changing business landscape. As we were discussing how to make the change, one of the musical chair executives who had been recently rotated left to right piped up and said “We cannot change it; the glossy brochures (pitfall number 11) have just arrived from the printers and are being distributed.” Just like a tombstone we etch the strategic plan in stone and cannot change except once per year. Then we wonder why the rest of the organization is not taking the strategic plan and its objectives to heart.

When the Tombstone Pitfall hits an organization, it is time to begin to plan the wake and the funeral. When we become so solidified, resistant, and blind to changing conditions that we feel we can wait a year to update our goals and objectives then the end is nearer than we are willing to believe.

The Tombstone Pitfall is the capstone to all the other pitfalls since it will be a place to inscribe the epitaph of “Here Was The Company That Could Have Been. It Just Did Not Change Fast Enough Or Quick Enough.”

If organizations are going to survive in the future they must become more fluid and less structured. They need to have the ability to change on a dime. Flexible, fluid, and dynamic are the words that will describe organizations that survive. We will use an Etch-A-Sketch to write our strategic plans in the more agile planning environment of the near future.

Strategic Planning Self-Analysis

Instructions: After each of the pitfalls check the appropriate column as it applies to your organization - It is **Always** there, **Sometimes** we have the problem, and **Never** in this organization. Multiply the “Always” column number of checkmarks by 1, the “Sometimes” number of check marks by 3, and the “Never” number of check marks by 5. The highest score is 150 which is a world class strategic planning organization.

Pitfalls	Always	Sometimes	Never
1. Mix-up			
2. No Linkage			
3. Data Gathering			
4. Meeting of No Purpose			
5. Roles and Responsibilities			
6. Involvement			
7. Wallpaper			
8. Lack of Capable Processes			
9. Lack of Aligned Measures			
10. Casual Consensus			
11. Slick Brochure			
12. Key Words			
13. Failure to Blend Resources Into Core Competencies			
14. Lack of Review Process			
15. No Way to Achieve It			
16. Alzheimer’s			
17. Details First			
18. Lack of Due Diligence			
19. Hobby			
20. Falling in Love			
21. Nightmare on Elm Street			
22. Rhythm and Blues			
23. Static Cling			
24. The OK Corral			
25. The “If I’s”			
26. The Train to Know Where			
27. The Victory Celebration			
28. Musical Chairs			
29. Say What?			
30. Tombstone			
Total Number of Check Marks:			
Multiply By:			
Score:			