

Making Strategy Stick
Joanne L. Smikle
www.smiklespeaks.com

An enterprise cannot flourish without a clear, compelling strategy. It is strategy that drives resource allocation, market penetration and any number of other activities that define success for a long term care company. So, if strategy is so important, why is it not consistently reflected in operations? The answer is simple, without purposeful, consistent leadership attention strategy will not stick. This article provides three techniques for making strategy stick.

#1. Make it relevant

If your strategy is based on the long term care company of the 1990's you'd better wake up so that you can catch up and keep up! Invest the time and energy analyzing your strategic plan and the activities that it dictates. If your plan is a moldy oldie that no one remembers, it is time to begin the strategic planning process in earnest. Work to devise a relevant, succinct plan that will enable your company to reach its peak potential.

#2. Build accountability at all levels

Even the most senior staff must be held accountable for managing resources in a manner consistent with the organization's strategic intent. Be certain that formal evaluation and performance management processes are well-aligned with your strategy. Measure key components of performance as they relate to your mission, vision and values---all of which are directly linked to strategy. Ensure that rewards and sanctions are used to reinforce the tenets of your strategy.

#3. Talk about it---to anyone and everyone

Strategy that is only articulated in the annual report is not strategy at all. Senior leaders are responsible for talking about strategy and its relationship to every aspect of operations. Break it down to people in language that they can understand. Link strategy to each individual's job---that means helping a DON understand how handling every aspect of care impacts revenue, reputation and the bottom-line success of the company. That also means that you will find ways to integrate a discussion of strategy into every meeting, no matter how mundane the topic.

Strategy can stick and it can have meaning. It is up to senior leaders to make sure that happens. These three tips will help you integrate strategy into every aspect of your company's work.