

Big Ideas

Look to the future

“Scan the horizon for future opportunities.” – Captain Bob



As the founder of the World Professional Pirates Association, I always advise new pirate captains to think strategically.

Strategic thinkers know that their futures will not be like their pasts. Furthermore, they do not wait for “Lady Luck” to decide what kind of future they will have. Rather, they set out to create their own desired futures.

Strategic thinkers scan the horizon to identify emerging trends likely to impact on their organization and its markets.

They then create a future-focused purpose to fulfill, set goals to achieve, and create game plans to succeed.

Strategic issues that pirates faced include the following: Whether they choose to be outlawed pirates or law-abiding privateers. (Pirates were outlaws and subject to a speedy trial and death by hanging when caught. Privateers on the other hand, were legalized pirates, authorized by their governments to capture and then sell ships and cargoes of enemy nations, sharing the prize money with their government.)

Where they would sail. (The world is huge and those pirates who tried to chase ships all over the world wore out their sails, their rigging and themselves, and sailed for long periods of time between prizes captured. Conversely, those who chose a “profitable” patch of the ocean to sail were much more successful.)

Who they should elect as their officers or leaders. Their choice of leaders depended very largely on the responses to the previous two decisions outlined above. Many pirate leaders could not accept the standards of conduct required of law-abiding and patriotic privateers.

What future will you create for your organization and yourself? What purpose will you fulfill? What goals will you set out to achieve? Who will you serve? Based on your answers to these four questions, what kinds of people and leaders will you want to attract to your organization?

Wayne Gretzky said it well when asked why he was so successful in scoring goals when he said, “I skate to where I think the puck will be.” Are you following the puck with everyone else, or are you looking to the future and positioning yourself to succeed?

Captain Bob



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