For Founders: How to Sync Strategy, Execution and Growth

This is part 1 of a 3-part series on how to sync your **Strategy, Execution and Growth**.

Part 1 - Strategy: Think Slow, Decide Fast

Let's begin with the purpose of strategy. What is it anyway?

For me, it's to make informed, clear, sound decisions and to be able to do so confidently and consistently.

I'm not here to peddle fluff and PowerPoints masquerading as strategy (sorry consultants).

I'm talking about real, important work here. The work of you first thinking slow and then deciding fast.

In its simplest form, strategy boils down to two core actions: 1) think and 2) decide.

Think Slow

It takes time to conduct the research, self-questioning and deep thinking to create a strategy worth its salt.

It's a learning exercise. You will throw away work. It will feel like a waste. It's not.

If you're like me as a Founder, you will also have some existential crises along the way as you're banging your head against the wall.

Saying one thing with passion one day and something completely opposite three days later.

Wondering how you're four years into something with a set of questions that should be answered by now.

Questioning why you started the company in the first place. Those sorts of fun things!

As painful and counterproductive as it may feel at times, I don't recommend rushing it. Hence **"think slow"**.

You start by questioning assumptions and challenging existing approaches. What you're trying to do here is learn in an iterative fashion and inch your way closer to a semblance of a strategy that will guide you.

This is often the most time consuming phase of your strategy, as it should be given its importance.

If you don't put in the work here, you are not likely to deliver on the purpose of strategy -- making informed, clear, sound decisions.

I want you (and me) to think slow and learn fast. They do not run counter to each other.

I’m not suggesting you do this in a purely theoretical manner. Hopefully you have some data from previous efforts to inform you so you’re learning fast as you’re thinking slow.

We’re also not going into a cave here and emerging with some shining treatise months later without it having seen the light of day. There’s no big reveal.

This is where having a feedback loop for your execution, growth and strategy becomes really important. To have the full picture, you must aggregate the pieces of information across the business.

Typically, many people touch many pieces. So information collection, organization and sharing across the team must regularly occur.

Everyone must understand why it matters. Otherwise it may just feel like an extra job or burden without a clear purpose. To a degree, execution should happen in silos with focus, but strategy cannot.

As you collaborate and discover, you all get smarter and more dialed in and your strategy solidifies.

And now it’s time to...

Decide Fast

At some point, you must quit thinking, be satisfied with the answers you have and act. The time has come to **“decide fast”.**

Making this step forward is not as easy as it sounds.

Making decisions can be scary. Decisions carry risk. But, it’s your job as a leader to get on with it.

I want you to take comfort in two things:

1. **The data -** You have gathered from the work you’ve done. You did all that hard work to become very informed. Don’t doubt the work you put in and the learnings you gained.

2. **Your gut -** While you were consciously working, your subconscious was working in parallel in the background. Those gut feelings, they’ve been fed by it. Don’t discount them. Use them.

If you get stuck here, your team is stuck. Your company is stuck.

So, this is the time to be fast (hallelujah) and demonstrative. Not the time for iterating or second guessing. Go!

I’ve decided I have no more to say here :)

Wrapping Up With a Plan

Once you’ve decided, don’t just jump into action. I know you want to. But, take some time to plan first.

Plans don’t need to be 30 pages. Strive to keep them simple (and executable) with a purpose and some process buoyed by goals and deliverables to measure success and provide accountability.

Keep it simple, but put one in place.

Get help with planning if it’s a weak spot of yours, as it is of mine. You likely have some folks on your team who are much better planners or project managers than you are.

Strategy is not a one and done thing. It’s not meant to sit on the shelf forever and collect dust.

It must evolve and improve in conjunction with your execution across all aspects of the business.

Well there you have it. You “slowed down to speed up”. Only then, can you truly **“move quick and not break”**.

Now, it’s time to execute. (our next post)