



Albu on Strategy

**CELEBRATING
15 YEARS
IN BUSINESS
1994-2009**

One Game at a Time Gets You the PRIZE

There is something very special about great athletes and coaches at any level. They never lose sight of their long term goal. It's a driving passion to achieve the prize at the end of the season that keeps them going. That passion provides each player the energy to work hard to win the next game, knowing that their efforts will bring them one step closer to the ultimate trophy they aspire to win.

What does this have to do with strategy? Actually, there are important lessons we can learn that can impact your company's success. Too often the short term needs of a company overshadow its long term goals. The "noise" of the moment drains resources and distracts management so much that they forget about the ultimate "trophy" the company is aspiring to achieve over the long term. Success depends upon whether the company has developed and communicated the goals in such a way that everyone in the organization is aligned behind them. If there is no "trophy" the organization can get passionate about, it's probably going to be difficult to get excited about activities needed to get there.

This is where strategic planning and strategy management play such an important role in any organization's success.

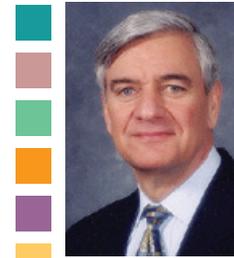
Leadership Lessons

If you are like many of my clients, your leadership skills are now more important than ever as we move through these uncertain economic times. In a recent interview by the *New York Times* (May 10, 2009 Corner Office), James Schiro, CEO of Zurich Financial Services was asked what was the most important leadership lesson he had learned over the years. His response is worth taking note of. Schiro said, it's the ability to listen and make people feel they are making a contribution. The second most important leadership lesson is to

Keep the following points in mind:

- Get everyone in the organization passionate about achieving the ultimate "trophy." Then, be sure every key strategic initiative you embark on is linked to achieving the goal. As in golf, each hole a golfer plays has an impact on the overall outcome of the match. People need to understand how each strategic initiative they commit to is linked to the greater long term good of the company. Each short term success brings them closer to the ultimate goal.
- Recognize that as markets, competitors and customers change, strategy needs to adapt to those changes. Basketball teams change their strategies, put in new plays, and adapt as needed to win each game. Your organization needs to be flexible, adapting strategy to market realities, without losing sight of the long term.

If you don't have a strategic plan in place, most likely you don't have a clear long term goal for your organization to focus on. *Albu Consulting* can help you develop your long term strategy and create a management system to execute strategy successfully. Give me a call for a free consultation.



Dear Friends:

This issue marks the 15th anniversary of *Albu Consulting*. Thank you, my loyal clients and supporters, for

all you have done to contribute to our success.

Great corporate leaders are like great athletic coaches: they have the ability to focus on what has to be done right now, while never losing sight of the long-term goal. Like great coaches, they inspire their players with a vision of the ultimate prize and provide them with a game plan designed to achieve it.

In today's uncertain economy, your task as leader is daunting: to keep your people engaged, excited, and certain that the company is on course to achieve success while others flounder and fail.

In our lead story, we talk about balancing focus with flexibility, adapting your strategy to the new realities of the market as you continue to drive your company toward its long term goals.

Our Recommended Reading lists five of author John C. Maxwell's 21 Laws to help you lead your people – and your company – where they need to go.

In order for that to happen, our story on Leadership Lessons points out, everyone involved must know what the ultimate goal is, and what part they will play in achieving it.

That is your challenge as a leader: not to lose sight of long-term goals as you deal with short-term issues. Our job at *Albu Consulting* is to help you do that. If you would like to discuss a specific concern, or simply gain a better understanding of how we may be able to assist you, please give me a call at 203/321-2147.



make people understand the significance of the long term strategy.

Both of these points are right on target and have been the topics of past *Albu on Strategy* newsletters.

1. Be sure to involve, engage, and excite the people around you about the strategies you are pursuing. Make them feel inclusive in developing the strategy and

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RECOMMENDED READING

The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow them and people will follow you

By John C. Maxwell

If you are in a leadership position and have not yet read this book, it would be worth your while. This is John Maxwell's revised and updated 10th anniversary edition, and there are four basic ideas to keep in mind as you survey the 21 laws of leadership: they can be learned; they can stand alone; they carry consequences; and they are the foundation of leadership.

I'd like to highlight only a few of these laws that relate to the leader's role in long term strategic thinking and planning.

Law #4: The law of navigation: Anyone can steer the ship, but it takes a leader to chart the course. Leaders see the whole trip in their minds, even before they leave the dock. They have a vision of where they want to go and understand what they will need to get there. They are also realists, recognizing that there will be obstacles to overcome along the way.

Law #6: The law of solid ground: Trust is the foundation of leadership. People will tolerate honest mistakes. People will also give leaders a grace period for connecting with others. However, people will not forgive lapses in character. Character communicates consistency, potential and respect.

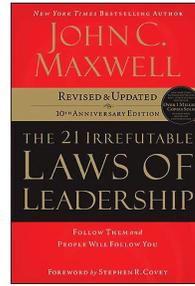
Law #8: The law of intuition: Leaders evaluate everything with leadership bias.

Leaders look at the world differently. They look years ahead and have the ability to step back and see where the organization is heading. Their intuition tells them when conditions are changing, and trouble or opportunities are coming.

Law #14: The law of buy-in: People buy into the leader, then the vision. People do not follow causes, they follow people. Your success as a leader is measured by your ability to take people where they need to go, but this will only happen if people first buy into the leader.

Law #20: The law of explosive growth: To add growth, lead followers – to multiply, lead leaders. Leaders are naturally impatient and want to move fast. If you develop leaders, your organization can achieve explosive growth. However, leaders are hard to find, hard to gather and hard to keep. Only if you stay ahead of them can you keep adding value to their growth and hold their attention.

These are just a few examples of the laws of leadership, and there is much more, including how to affect change in your behavior to learn to become a better leader for you organization.



Albu *info*

Albu Consulting is a strategy development and implementation consulting firm dedicated to helping businesses achieve sustainable profitable growth over the long term. We work with owners, Boards, CEOs and leadership teams to bring out the best in companies. We seek to:

1. Optimize resource allocation by focusing on high priority, value-added initiatives, while eliminating wasted time and money on low priority activities
2. Create an effective and efficient organizational culture, increasing collaboration and communication, eliminating silos and building an accountability-based culture
3. Enhance management's decision making process, making better decisions with more confidence over the long term
4. Create a culture of continuous improvement with a willingness to change

Founded in 1994, Albu Consulting is recognized for delivering results that create value over the long term. Collaboratively with our clients, we provide practical and actionable recommendations that are rooted in sound, best-practice business principles, and industry knowledge.

John Ragozzino, President, Ragozzino Foods
"We were experiencing rapid growth for the past few years and UCONN Family Business Program recommended I call Albu Consulting, a strategy consulting firm with experience working with family businesses. It has been one year since we started work with Albu Consulting and during that time we developed our strategic plan and put in place a strategy management system to manage the execution of the plan. Albu Consulting has been a great help in moving us from a family run business to a family owned business. Dick's wealth of experience and contacts has proven to be an invaluable asset to our growth. His commitment to our company is nothing short of fantastic. I would recommend Dick and his company to anyone looking to profitably grow their business."

Please contact me directly for a confidential discussion of your business issues, or if you know of someone that might benefit from our services, we would welcome the referral.

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“The task of management is to make people capable of joint performance, to make their strengths effective and their weaknesses irrelevant.”

– Peter Drucker
from his book *The New Realities*

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figuring out what action steps are needed to make it happen. If they feel a part of the process, they will feel responsible and accountable for its success.

2. As stated in the lead article in this issue, make sure everyone understands what the ultimate prize is... the vision. Stay out front of your managers and employees with the message, reminding

them about why the strategy is right for the business.

James Schiro mentions in the article that he once asked Colin Powell what he felt the most important leadership lesson was. Powell said, "The troops have to understand where they are going." People cannot handle uncertainty. It is the job of the leader to eliminate uncertainty.