

“The Strategic Sprint” by Jeff Rendel, Certified Speaking Professional

Interested in adding some entrepreneurial zeal to your strategic plan and its execution? Consider including 90-day Strategic Sprints in your operating plans as a means to build start-up excitement and senses of urgency among your executives, managers, and front line leaders. It’s an excellent way to always be in the mindset of building a new business within the context of an existing business.

The Strategic Sprint is a natural offshoot of your strategic plan and its Year One operating plan. Odds are, your operating plan contains actions that need to materialize this month, next month, this quarter, and so on. Gantt charts, spreadsheets, and To Do lists inhabit that working space. What’s occasionally missing is the tactical enthusiasm, commitment to action, and enthusiasm about reaching new goals that adds intensity to your strategic plan.

The Strategic Sprint is a self-designed, 90-day entrepreneurial race to accomplish a handful of targets built into your operating plan. It’s a technique to break down the enormity of all that must occur in Year One and realize the attainability of related functions in the next 90 days. At heart, it’s a contest to accomplish in the short-term details that add up and create much value in the long-term. It’s short enough to easily visualize success yet long enough to require focus and planning.

Call it your Spring Sprint, Summer Sprint, Fall Sprint, or Winter Sprint. Set a deadline and group of measures that specify success. Post and communicate your Sprint goals everywhere. Establish a reward for your team or credit union for success in your Sprint. Then go for it. Incremental activities and victories along the way are effective, realistic, and inspiring. And, repeatable.

Many credit unions have incorporated Strategic Sprints in their operating formats to achieve the objectives that make up their strategic plans. It adds an enterprising spirit to their cultures, and allows them to be action-oriented in their continuous service to members and future-focused in their aspiration to remain significant in their members’ lives. Boards can appreciate and recognize progress; executives can design and evaluate success; and, entire credit union teams can be a part of strategy for tomorrow in the here and now of today.

Consider Strategic Sprints in the execution of your strategic plan. Once you’ve succeeded in your first Sprint, begin another and repeat the process. You’ll learn that this style of thinking big and acting small creates more than just scorecard results. It produces a culture committed to the exhilaration of growing a business and a set of skills dedicated to the details of real-time execution.

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