

A website for the "practically rigorous" strategy professional







www.strategybest.com – Knowledge Taxonomy In 15
Components – Soundbites Only*

Bill Blgler

^{*} See separate PowerPoint for the Detailed Version of the Knowledge Taxonomy



www.strategybest.com

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Knowledge Taxonomy

15 Components That Are the Minimum, Necessary and Sufficient Underpinnings of Observed Competition for For-Profit Firms and Levers of Performance



www.strategybest.com - Knowledge Taxonomy

Our "Secret Sauce" Strategy	in the Established Firm The Key Dilemma	Strategy in the Major New Venture Startup The Key Dilemma
Offsets to Downward Fade of Free Cash Flow	√	√
2. Punching Through 4 Kinds of Barriers in the Established Firm	√	√ Fend off early
Candidates for the Laws of Strategy for the Established Firm	√	√?? May not apply
4. Environmental Carrying Capacity and Market Rhythm	√	√
5. Timing of Four Competitive Thrusts	√	√
6. Executive, Operating and Support Processes Being PALS With Market Rhythm	√	√
7. Cross Process Impacts	√	√
8. The Initiative Management Process As the Key Executive Process	√	√



www.strategybest.com - Knowledge Taxonomy

Our "Secret Sauce" Strateg	y in the Established Firm The Key Dilemma	Strategy in the Major New Venture Startup The Key Dilemma
9. General Firm Valuation Model	√	√
10. Speed, People, Intangible Assets & Recognizing New Opportunities (SPIR) – Key Macro Bases for Competitive Advantage and Wealth Creation	√	√
11. Dynamic Capabilities – Current Most Useful General Strategy Framework for Competitive Advantage and Wealth Creation	√	√
12. 6 Key Elements and Relation to SPIR – Detail Bases for Competitive Advantage and Wealth Creation	√	V
13. 6 Key Element Metric Concepts in the Context of SPIR Provides an Action Measurement Drumbeat	√	√
14. Version 1 of Knowledge, Competencies and Behaviors of the Successful Strategy Professional in the For-Profit Firm	√	√
15. Detailed Strategy Framework Valuation Model & Tool	√	√



www.strategybest.com - Knowledge Taxonomy - cont'd

Our "Secret Sauce"

Strategy in the Established Firm & Strategy in the Major New The Key Dilemma

The Key Dilemma

The Key Dilemma

All Above Gives Rise To Offerings:

StrategyBest Diagnostics	\checkmark	√ Modified Form
StrategyBest Surveys and Quick Polls	√	√
StrategyBest Tools and Techniques	√	\checkmark
StrategyBest Templates	√	\checkmark
StrategyBest Publications	√	\checkmark
StrategyBest Action Research Projects	√	\checkmark
StrategyBest Learning Modules	√	\checkmark
StrategyBest Consulting Services	V	√ Modified Form



Starting in Bite Sized Chunks: The Soundbites and Lessons Learned Overview and Canvas

You need not take this on all at once. Read a Soundbite and Lessons Learned and then delve into the Component(s) in the Detail ppt that are an issue or interest you. Then proceed to others as you need them.

Bill Bigler

1. Offsets to Downward Fade of Free Cash Flow

Soundbite:

According to Bart Madden's work (www.learningwhatworks.com) and my research and experience over 30 years in the field, the Established Firm will experience downward fading free cash through time due to the "crush of competition"

Fatal Flaws If Soundbite is Ignored:

Merging out of existence or outright failure in bankruptcy

What You and Your Firm Should Do Right Now:

Engage in innovation and top line revenue growth initiatives to offset with upward fade in free cash flow. This will take time to incubate. See our estimate of the numbers of firms for each offset in the Detail.

1. Offsets to Downward Fade of Free Cash Flow

Lessons Learned and Further Things to Think About and Do:

This is virtually a law of competition for the for-profit firm. Merely protecting a prior and current favorable strategy position is a "slow motion train wreck" waiting to happen.

If your firm has not embraced the Innovation Revolution, it should. There are a variety of great contributions out there from Clayton Christenson, Nick Webb, Strategos and many others

2. Punching Through Four Kinds of Barriers in the Established Firm

Soundbite:

The Established Firm always has a mix of four kinds of barriers plaguing innovation and strategy execution. These are Subject Matter, Process, Structure and Culture barriers

Fatal Flaws If Soundbite is Ignored:

The firm will be a long cycle time, high rework place to work and delay will be everywhere in the firm. This can delay the growth in the market value of the firm by 25% per year or more

What You and Your Firm Should Do Right Now:

Start building a culture of "transparent meritocracy" where people are not to blame and where barriers can be identified and removed

2. Punching Through Four Kinds of Barriers in the Established Firm

Lessons Learned and Further Things to Think About and Do:

This is virtually another law for the established for-profit firm. If the courage is not summoned to create a culture of transparent meritocracy and install true process discipline with active barrier identification and removal, talent will leave your firm for faster, more agile competitors who are growing shareholder value for the benefit of all.

If your firm allows this slowness and frustrating rework to continue, shareholder value growth could come to a standstill, to the frustration of shareholders and the board of directors.

My book, *The New Science of Strategy Execution: How Firms Become Fast, Sleek Wealth Creators* (2004) and many other great materials can help. Several of the chapters from my book are attached in this website pro bono

3. Candidates for the Laws of Strategy

Soundbite:

A law is a statement that works in all contexts and has this structure:

Premises
Initial Conditions
Causal Linkages
Thereby allowing **Predictions** to made

Strategy does not have laws like the physical sciences do. But the field has some candidates for your consideration

Fatal Flaws If Soundbite is Ignored:

A high probability of incorrect or disastrous strategy formulation and execution decisions

What You and Your Firm Should Do Right Now:

Learn the strategy laws and then at every key strategy meeting ask if one or more of the laws applies to your firm and your industry, or if they might apply in the near future if you are immune to them now

3. Candidates for the Laws of Strategy

Lessons Learned and Further Things to Think About and Do:

See the next slide for Lessons learned.

If you do not think laws of strategy exist or do not apply to your firm or industry, please think again. If your firm and industry are immune to the laws, you are lucky. Be poised though to pick up weak, early signals that your firm and industry are coming under the spell of one or more of these laws.



The Negative Effects of the Six Main Laws of Strategy



Strategy Law #6:

Your Industry "Nature" Determines the Average Profitability of All of the Competitors in Your Industry

(Average Industry ROIC Drops to Floor of Government Risk Free Bond Rates)



Strategy Law #3: Customers and Profit Pools Do

Not Stand Still

(A Large Portion of Your Customers Can Disappear Seemingly Overnight)

Strategy Law #1:
Prices and Costs Always Decline

(Individual Firm ROIC Too Low to Generate Cash Flow or to Attract Needed Capital)



Strategy Law #2: Competitive Position Determines Your Options

(Trying to become something you are not too quickly can lead to serious blunder or failure)



Strategy Law #5:
Dominate Something, Do Not Be Spread
Too Thin

Strategy Law #4: Complexity Is A Killer

(Cost per unit sold is too high and customers can defect due to confusion or frustration)



(Too small a size relative to potential size or too small a "sphere of influence" causes cost per unit sold to be too high and customer willingness to pay too low)

4. Environmental Carrying Capacity and Market Rhythm

Soundbite:

Environmental Carrying Capacity is the condition of your industry or competitive space that allows for hospitable competition or conversely causes survival of the fittest winner take all tactics to be manifest

Market Rhythm is the true drumbeat in your industry or competitive space and is estimated at 4 to 5 times as fast as how often your best customers buy

Fatal Flaws If Soundbite is Ignored:

Carrying Capacity: High probability of a mis-match between your strategy framework and what is required to win

Market Rhythm: High probability of everything in your firm being out of PALS with your market rhythm. PALS = Prioritized, Aligned, Linked and Synchronized

What You and Your Firm Should Do Right Now:

Measure your Environmental Carrying Capacity and Market Rhythm and move to have your strategy framework be matched to it and all of your processes be PALS with your market rhythm

4. Environmental Carrying Capacity and Market Rhythm

Lessons Learned and Further Things to Think About and Do:

There is an alignment and matching between your firm's strategy framework and the nature of your Environmental Carrying Capacity that should occur. Firms like Dell created a lot of shareholder value in a very Low Carrying Capacity environment, but this is not the norm. You can choose to ignore the mandate for this alignment and matching, but this needs to be an informed choice.

Being out of PALS with fast market rhythms causes all kinds of issues: poor strategy execution, disjointed problem solving and the possibility that a major new entrant can enter against you that is barriers free and is in total PALS with the market rhythm.

My book, *The New Science of Strategy Execution: How Established Firms Become Fast, Sleek Wealth Creators* can help. I do not know of many other materials that cover these two elements of the Knowledge Taxonomy. Several of the chapters are attached in this website pro bono

5. Timing of Four Competitive Thrusts

Soundbite*:

There seem to be four major competitive thrusts at the business unit level: "Easy" Profitable Growth, Process Engineering, Cost Reduction and Turnaround Management in the context of the competitive dynamics of your EEE. Your firm must match the *timing* of these thrusts as the EEE goes from High Attractiveness/High Carrying Capacity along a path that ends up at Lowest Attractiveness/Lower Carrying Capacity and from Small in Firm Size, Scope and Complexity to Large Size, Scope and Complexity.

Fatal Flaws If Soundbite is Ignored:

It seems that there is a limit to the manageability of large sized, scoped and high complexity for-profit firms. About 50% of the time as the firm gets large in size, scope and complexity, it also has moved into lower attractiveness/lower carrying capacity environments. About 35% of the time we find the best course of action is to divest assets and units that are destroying shareholder value and retreat to only those EEEs where the carrying capacity is higher. Thus the firm re-invents itself as smaller in size, scope and complexity in higher carrying capacity environments.

5. Timing of Four Competitive Thrusts cont'd

What You and Your Firm Should Do Right Now:

Given the caveat below that this element needs more research for corroboration, your firm should pause to consider if its current competitive thrust is actually bearing fruit for you. For instance to try to force fit innovation and top line revenue initiatives into a competitive space that is Low Attractiveness/Low Carrying Capacity, could be inviting frustration and headache. And to try to imitate the processes of a General Electric while in a High Carrying Capacity environment where the firm is small in size, scope and complexity could bring unneeded confusion and complexity.

^{*} Admittedly this Element of the Knowledge Taxonomy needs a little more corroborating research for me to be totally comfortable suggesting it can add value for you. But it has seemed to work well for me.

5. Timing of Four Competitive Thrusts

Lessons Learned and Further Things to Think About and Do:

A classic example of this element is the old International Harvester company. They were in a variety of tractor and truck businesses. Through time many of the environmental carrying capacities they ended up with were very low and inhospitable. They grow to be a large, widely scoped and complex organization. They sold everything except the truck business and renamed it Navistar.

If your firm is currently encountering problems and nagging frustrations, a check on the compatibility of your dominant thrust with the nature of your environmental carrying capacity could yield some fruitful insights.

This Component is the age old debate between is competition "determined" for us or do we in essence have "free will" to strategically choose anything we think we can execute well. We will offer more insights into this Component over time.

6. Executive, Operating and Support Processes Being PALS With Market Rhythm

Soundbite:

PALS = Prioritized, Aligned, Linked and Synchronized. Your portfolio of Executive, Operating and Support processes must be PALS with your firm's Market Rhythm. PALS with your Market Rhythm allows integrating the speed of the Process Revolution with fast Market Rhythms.

Fatal Flaws If Soundbite is Ignored:

Your firm has a high probability of not being able to lead and manage at the speed of change. It could very easily fall behind your faster and more agile competitors in just about everything – new product introductions, execution, acquisitions, etc.

What You and Your Firm Should Do Right Now:

Map your portfolio of Executive, Operating and Support processes, measure their baseline cycle times and amount of rework and compare to your Market Rhythm drumbeat and your fastest and most agile competitors

6. Executive, Operating and Support Processes Being PALS With Market Rhythm

Lessons Learned and Further Things to Think About and Do:

Not embracing the Process Revolution and not mapping your portfolio of Executive, Operating and Support processes leaves you know means to know how fast and agile your firm is at the current time period (baseline condition). As such, you cannot compare this baseline with how fast and agile you need to be. For example, a leading lighting manufacturer found that it took on average 7 years for any key lighting strategic initiative to be developed, launched and on it way to break even much less to earn its required rate of return. We benchmarked against a larger competitor and several smaller firms and found that the required cycle time needed to one one year. The firm needed to take 6 years of out its total cycle time.

7. Cross-Process Impacts

Soundbite:

The Process Revolution stated in the early 1990s got us past functional silos. This is not enough in today's fast market rhythm environments. You must lead and manage and extract the huge benefits of managing cross-process impacts in your Operating Processes to serve customers efficiently and effectively.

Fatal Flaws If Soundbite is Ignored:

I would not say there is a fatal flaw here. Ignore this Component and your are leaving a lot of money on the table in terms of waste, wasted opportunity to execute on your innovation efforts and service your customers much, much better

What You and Your Firm Should Do Right Now:

Start learning the science of where processes impact each other and how this linkage can reduce waste, increase cycle time and really leverage your investments in becoming a process driven company

7. Cross-Process Impacts

Lessons Learned and Further Things to Think About and Do:

Not recognizing and managing and extracting benefits from the reality of cross-process impacts is an operations failure. Good to great operations people know of these cross-process impacts and potential leverage for results.

The next vista is to research and measure and understand the cross-process impacts on Operating Processes from Executive and Support processes. I think this is a huge lever for operating performance and increases in the market value of the firm.

8. The Initiative Management Process As the Key Executive Process of the Firm

Soundbite:

The Initiative Management Process should be **the key** Executive Process in your firm. This process brings venture capital/private equity disciplines inside of the Established Firm. This single process helps the most in bringing a culture of a transparent meritocracy inside of your firm. This process approaches strategy execution outside of the Ongoing Work of the Firm, unlike other approaches to strategy execution.

Fatal Flaws If Soundbite is Ignored:

Executing strategy in the On-going work of the firm is always fraught with at least mild frustration if not downright stalls. The reason is because it is in the On-going work that the mix of Subject Matter, Process, Structure and Culture barriers reside.

What You and Your Firm Should Do Right Now:

Put in a trial Initiative Management Process using something as simple as Excel to track your current active and new strategic initiatives to either completion or early termination

8. The Initiative Management Process As the Key Executive Process of the Firm

Lessons Learned and Further Things to Think About and Do:

It took me fifteen years to figure out why world class strategy execution was and is so difficult. It is because all other approaches to strategy execution that I know of (the 'static alignment' school, the Balanced Scorecard, Management by Objectives), etc. execute strategy in the On-going work of the firm.

The Initiative Management Process (IMP) xecutes current and new strategic initiatives outside of the On-going work and brings Venture Capital/Private Equity disciplines inside of the Established Firm.

If your firm can install a culture of a transparent meritocracy, learn process innovation disciplines, then it can experiment with using the IMP as the key executive process of the firm. I think you will be surprised at the benefits.

See the Learning Module – "World Class Strategy Execution" for more detail.

9. General Firm Valuation Model

Soundbite:

Recall our view is that the proper super-ordinate goal of the for-profit firm is to grow the value of the firm. This General Model includes the work of Bart Madden (www.learningwhatworks.com) and Carl Rappaport (1986, 1998). The Madden Valuation model and the list of Rappaport Valuation Drivers depict very clearly what is included in firm valuation, and what is not, and how value is financially created.

Fatal Flaws If Soundbite is Ignored:

Resources can be allocated to assets that are actually destroying firm valuation or slowing the growth of firm valuation.

What You and Your Firm Should Do Right Now:

I think most firms know of the debates that have gone on for well over thirty years about shareholder value being the proper super-ordinate goal of the for-profit enterprise. But if your firm is new and you are not mindful of the requirement to earn more than your weighted average cost of capital, I would suggest getting a finance professor from your local university to start the education process.

9. General Firm Valuation Model

Lessons Learned and Further Things to Think About and Do:

I think the quote from Koller, Goedhart and Wessels (2010, p.4) tells it all:

"The guiding principle of value creation is that companies create value by investing capital they raise from investors to generate future cash flows at rates of return exceeding the cost of capital (the rate investors require to be paid for the use of their capital). The faster companies can increase their revenue and deploy more capital at attractive rates of return, the more value they will create. The combination of growth and return on invested capital (ROIC) relative to its cost is what drives value. Companies can sustain strong growth and high returns on invested capital only if they have a well-defined competitive advantage. This is how competitive advantage, the core concept of business strategy, links to the guiding principle of value creation"

If your firm has not begun conversations about what its best super-ordinate goal should be, I cannot think of a better time to do this.

10. Speed, People, Intangible Assets, Recognizing New Opportunities (SPIR) – Key Macro Bases for Competitive Advantage and Wealth Creation

Soundbite:

From our Secret Sauce. If someone would ask us what we would say in an elevator ride that is the essence of strategic management today, we would say SPIR.

Fatal Flaws If Soundbite is Ignored:

We feel SPIR is like a multiplicative function, that is anything times zero is zero. If your firm does not have a viable solution for all of the aspects of SPIR, it could be zero or non-existent through being merged out of existence or outright failure in bankruptcy.

What You and Your Firm Should Do Right Now:

Begin to study and think through what is missing from your firm or any or all of the aspects of SPIR and begin a movement for dramatic improvement.

10. Speed, People, Intangible Assets, Recognizing New Opportunities (SPIR) – Key Macro Bases for Competitive Advantage and Wealth Creation

Lessons Learned and Further Things to Think About and Do:

In operations excellence lore, for many years firms lived with a trade-off. You could have two of three aspects below but not all three at the same time:

Time (Speed)
Cost
Quality

Now you have to have all three to just be in the ball game as a common denominator.

We will the multiplicative relation in SPIR requires the same thing – it is all or nothing.

11. Dynamic Capabilities – Current Most Useful New General Strategy Framework for Competitive Advantage and Wealth Creation

Soundbite:

David Teece, an academic at Cal Berkeley has been working on Dynamic Capabilities since the early 1990s via almost pure academic research. It is starting to get traction for strategy professionals.

Fatal Flaws If Soundbite is Ignored:

Too early to tell if Dynamic Capabilities will replace the Positioning School is the current most useful general strategy framework. However if the premises, arguments and data supporting Dynamic Capabilities turn out to be uniformly true, the it could replace the Positioning School as the dominant paradigm

What You and Your Firm Should Do Right Now:

Start reading here and perhaps David Teece's and others writing on Dynamic Capbilities

11. Dynamic Capabilities – Current Most Useful New General Strategy Framework for Competitive Advantage and Wealth Creation

Lessons Learned and Further Things to Think About and Do:

Too early to tell. We all need to monitor and take action that is prudent and timely.

12. Six Key Elements and Relation to SPIR – Detail Bases for Competitive Advantage and Wealth Creation

Soundbite:

Based on the cumulative knowledge through the first 11 Components, we now offer six Elements that are the detail to SPIR. I bet you have your own approach to each of these six Elements, but we will offer what has worked for us. We will describe our central approach but there is a lot of detail for each of these six Elements embedded throughout this website – Learning Modules, Publications, Tools, Techniques, Templates, etc.

Fatal Flaws If Soundbite is Ignored:

The only fatal flaw here is if your firm has not forged at least an adequate solution for each of the six Elements. We find there can be staggered improvement based on what the firm needs and other Elements can be folded in over time. However, to grow the market value of the firm, eventually your firm needs a world class solution for each of the six Elements

What You and Your Firm Should Do Right Now:

Perform a strategic audit of where you are sound and where you need improvement. See next Component where we set out Metric Concepts for each Element. Set out an Improvement Roadmap and time table

12. Six Key Elements and Relation to SPIR – Detail Bases for Competitive Advantage and Wealth Creation

Lessons Learned and Further Things to Think About and Do:

Please see the next two slides for our "recipe" for leading and managing shareholder value



Road to Improvement in Firm Valuation Based on the Six Elements

- Baseline Assessment of the Six Elements
- Set Out Goals For World Class (or at least improved) Status Relative to Baseline for Each Element
- 3. Lay Out Practical and Prudent Time Line for Order and Start Date of Key Improvement Initiatives
- Install the *Initiative Management Process** as <u>the</u> Key Executive Process (Component #8)

^{*} See Bigler, The New Science of Strategy Execution: How the Established Firm Becomes a Fast, Sleek Wealth Creator, Praeger, 2004



Road to Improvement in Firm Valuation

- 5. Practice Best Practice Change Management to Help Foster a Change Mindset
- Set Out Metrics Via Dashboards That Are Lead and Lag in Nature for Monitoring
- 7. Lead and Manage Barrier Identification and Management
- 8. Practice the Discipline of Continuous Performance Improvement to Set the Bar Higher as Success and Confidence Take Hold

13. Six Key Element Metric Concepts in the Context of SPIR Provide An Action Measurement Drumbeat

Soundbite:

We firmly believe if you cannot measure something, you really cannot fully understand it. In this Component, we offer what we call an Element Metric Concept. This is because some of the measures have two divisors in them. But you can see the directionality required for a high measure and thus good to great solution for the six Elements.

Fatal Flaws If Soundbite is Ignored:

Most established firms have some system of measures. So there is not a fatal flaw here for most firms. What you forego is the ability to set our an improvement path based on improving the measures from your baseline current situation.

What You and Your Firm Should Do Right Now:

Assess whether you have data that has integrity for each measure (or how to obtain the data) and set out baseline measures and set goals for improvement over a set time span. Best is aligning the improvement timing with your market rhythm.

13. Six Key Element Metric Concepts in the Context of SPIR Provide An Action Measurement Drumbeat

Lessons Learned and Further Things to Think About and Do:

You can indeed measure the six Elements. If you you link the improvement time table to incentive compensation and performance reviews, you will be surprised at how fast improvement can be

14. Version 1 of Knowledge, Competencies and Behaviors of the Successful Strategy Professional in the For-profit Firm

Soundbite:

The successful strategy professional in the for-profit firm needs more than just knowledge to be successful. They also need Competencies and Behaviors to be successful in the role.

Fatal Flaws If Soundbite is Ignored:

Not becoming proficient in the Knowledge, Competencies and Behaviors as the strategy professional moves from Novice, to Apprentice, to Journeyman, to Virtuoso/Expert will render the professional as an average performer. The strategy professional needs to turbo-charge their Knowledge, Competencies and Behaviors to be a high performer helping to create and grow shareholder value or firm valuation for the private firm.

What You and Your Firm Should Do Right Now:

Advance from your current level of expertise as fast and as prudent as possible. If you are a Virtuoso/Expert, you always have improvement potential.

14. Version 1 of Knowledge, Competencies and Behaviors of the Successful Strategy Professional in the For-profit Firm

Lessons Learned and Further Things to Think About and Do:

The field of strategy will professionalize from its state as a craft to one where both science and art will be required. Do not hesitate to learn, practice, improve and then start the cycle over again

15. Detailed Strategy Framework Valuation Model*

Soundbite:

Components 1 – 14 are one side of the coin. The other is Component 15 where you model and "prove" that what you are doing is expected to increase shareholder value or firm valuation for the private firm.

Fatal Flaws If Soundbite is Ignored:

Sub-optimal leadership of your firm to downright mis-application of resources and the destruction of shareholder value or firm valuation

What You and Your Firm Should Do Right Now:

Use the accompanying Excel spreadsheet as a tool to take on the culture and discipline of verifying that what you are doing and planning to do is expected to increase shareholder value or firm valuation

^{*} See Excel Valuation Spreadsheet

15. Detailed Strategy Framework Valuation Model

Lessons Learned and Further Things to Think About and Do:

Many firms still do not fully understand the need to value what you are currently doing and plan to do with new strategies, initiatives, etc.

This is a violation of the fiduciary responsibility of the board, the top management team and the entire group in a firm charged with strategic management.