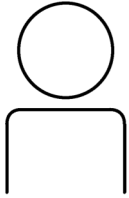


# Smitten with Strategy

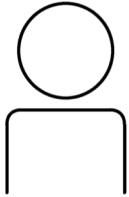
Chris Hester | TCUK 2019



# What is strategy?



**Michael Porter, *What is Strategy*:** Strategy is the creation of a unique and valuable position, involving a different set of activities.



**Richard Rumelt, *Good Strategy, Bad Strategy*:** The core of strategy work is always the same: discovering the critical factors in a situation and designing a way of coordinating and focusing actions to deal with those factors.

“Strategy is about finding **hidden things.**”

— Melanie Seibert, *Think Like a Strategist*, Confab 2019

# The challenge to strategy? Culture

“Culture is the formal or informal, agreed upon, attitudes and behaviors that are either rewarded or penalized inside an organization.”

Seth Mattison, *The War at Work*



# Content often gets stuck in “the work we do”



Strategy is a plan



People are actors  
in the plan



The plan gets  
things done

Deliverable-based  
thinking

# And loses sight of “how we work”



Strategy is dynamic



People are key players



Strategic plans anticipate growth

Strategic-thinking  
mindset

# So how do we get back on track?

Deliverable-based  
thinking



Strategic-thinking  
mindset

- Ask better questions
- Improve listening skills
- Examine our biases
- Increase awareness
- Support the ecosystems

# Ask better questions

## What that means

- Know your questions and have them prepared in advance.

## Examples

- What is the intent of ...?
- Who benefits from ...?
- How does this relate to ...?
- What would happen if ...?
- Can you provide an example of ... ?
- How will you measure the success of ... ?
- What is your role in ...?
- Have you considered ...?

## Tools

- Strategic content brief
- Documentation plan



# Improve listening skills

## What that means

- Listen to learn and understand.

## Examples

- Pay attention to the other person.
- Keep an open mind.
- Use body language and gestures to show that we're listening (e.g., nodding, open posture, etc.)
- Provide feedback (without interrupting).
- Summarize the key points to clarify and confirm what we heard.

## Tools

- Use active listening
- Ask open-ended questions
- Request feedback



## Story 1: Asking better questions

The content team wanted to give copywriters a tool that would guide conversations with stakeholders about content requirements.

- The strategic content brief facilitates intake of information such as content goals, key words, takeaways, target audiences, and related content.
- Copywriters use the brief to develop page content, which is then reviewed by the marketers and stakeholders before the strategic brief facilitated development.
- Content quality is increasing because of the collaboration between copywriters, marketers, and stakeholders within and across business units.



What tools or techniques that you use to ask better questions or practice better listening?



# Increase awareness

## What that means

- Share how the team works and how to work together.

## Examples

- Weekly calls to discuss content strategy and governance (cross-functional)
- Attendance at the monthly meetings to share updates from the content team
- Documented processes available on a team site and distributed as needed

## Tools

- Lunch 'n Learns
- Playbooks
- Team sites
- Training



# Examine personal biases

## What that means

- Practice outside-in thinking vs. inside-out thinking

## Examples

- How can I deal with someone whose opinions are different from mine?
- How can I welcome and explore new situations? How can I develop a more curious mind?
- How might this content be viewed from the customer's perspective?
- What questions might they have after reading the content?

## Tools

- Change request form
- Impact analysis
- Data and analytics



## Story 2: Increase awareness and manage bias

An organization wanted to standardize on a single content management platform. Technical authors who used their own tools to create and publish documentation were resistant. The project team:

- Involved all members of the documentation team in the implementation project.
- Anticipated questions and concerns to “meet issues at the door” and mitigate conflict.
- Gathered customer and industry data to validate the need to update content development and publishing processes.



What are ways that you increase awareness of what your team is doing?



# Support the ecosystems

## What that means

- Learn about the people, technology, processes, relationships, actions, and transactions that occur in the context of digital operations.

## Examples

- What is our content ecosystem?
- Who is involved in content strategy and operations?
- What is my role and how can I contribute to the ecosystems at large?

## Tools

- System mapping
- Process mapping
- Journey mapping



## Story 3: Defining an ecosystem

In an organization that used policy, process, and procedure documents for compliance training, documents didn't reflect current business processes. As a result, departments were failing performance audits.

The project:

- Identified business goals first
- Defined and mapped people, roles, responsibilities, processes, inputs, outputs and technologies
- Simplified processes and procedures, documented and provided training, and established governance rules for creating, maintaining, and archiving



What is your team's role in the content ecosystem? How have you affected change?



# What if we create a bridge?

Deliverable-based thinking

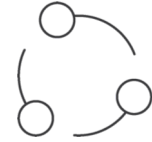
Strategic-mindset thinking

Ask better questions  
Improve listening skills  
Examine our biases  
Increase awareness  
Support the ecosystems

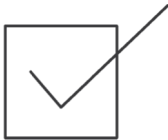
# Or better yet, aim for a cultural shift



Set a clear direction



Cultivate relationships



Encourage innovation  
within our processes



# Key ingredients to getting started

Create a clear vision.

Expect resistance.

Prioritize trust and support.

Start small, and add layers.

Look beyond collaboration—create opportunities to partner.



Questions?



# Resources





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Thank you

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**Empowering Trust™**