

The Fulfillment of Brilliance | Bruce W. Fritch

When it comes to strategy, we have allowed our socio-economic organizations – our businesses – to fall into a mindset that is quick, fast, busy, superficial, shallow, cursory and abbreviated. The strategy is a mile wide and an inch deep. It's the farthest thing from a well "organized life" and even a modicum of wisdom. Ultimately, superficiality does not serve us when we strive for achievement. As strategy is about guidelines for success, extraordinary goals require comprehensively conceived and clearly articulated guidance. Merely reorganizing the data doesn't cut it.

**"Science is organized knowledge.
Wisdom is organized life."**

- Immanuel Kant

From "as is" to "what could be."

Peter Drucker's famous quote, "Culture eats strategy for breakfast" is true, yet to sustain a brilliant culture in a complex organization a blueprint is needed in moving from "as is" to "what could be." That's where strategy serves as the bridge to aspiration. And to support and direct, strategy must be aligned with mission, vision and goals – and the culture must "get it" in order to do it.

Commonly in business organizations, people observe that strategic planning occurs with a superficial, production mentality (if it is done at all) and is little more than the reorganization of known premises and accepted data rather than the insightful pursuit of new, better, deeper understanding. The superficiality is compounded when the distracted, too-busy-to-go-deep, command-and-control "leaders" gesture impatiently with the attitude that strategic and tactical planning is time-consuming, optional work that adds little value – a distraction. This is particularly characteristic of apprehensive cultures, typified by political correctness.

Mediocrity comes from this intolerance for depth and impatience for fostering brilliance. Human aspiration, imagination, contemplation, and comprehensive thinking, driven by a deeply persistent process for getting to insight – skillfully facilitated – is the foundation of a successful strategy. Reorganized premises rarely yield insights, and without insights there is little brilliance to distinguish the latest strategic plan from previous plans.

**"Imagination is more important
than knowledge."**

- Albert Einstein



Strategic planning is about getting to insight and extraordinary human endeavor, not simply having a plan to present to the board and subsequently shelved for posterity. Done right, a comprehensive strategic plan can map the way for a generative culture that differentiates itself brilliantly, at every level. In turn, the culture that embraces strategy can deploy it with empathy.

Strategy and the planning process starts with the CEO (or business unit leader) and includes the executive team so executive leaders understand the intricate relationship between strategy, tactics and culture. Regardless of how great the strategy, if the culture is not engaged and aligned ... well, the strategy suffers the Drucker fate at breakfast, every day.

“Empathetic sensibility becomes indispensable to managing the emerging collaborative work environment.”

- Jeremy Rifkin

It begins with all stakeholders – *all* stakeholders (customers, employees, vendors, shareholders and communities) – participating in creating the mission, vision, goals, objectives, core human values, and operating guidelines. Then, and only then, can the entire stakeholder community communicate, reciprocate, and grow mutually. Without this broad inclusiveness, collaboration and accountability are just wishy-washy jargon.

If the distractions from brilliance continue, they foster mediocrity in mission, culture and accountability – severely limiting performance, profits and long-term growth, even in relatively strong sales and profit years.

At Fritch we facilitate strategic vision based on our depth of experience and understanding. We know that if strategy is to succeed, it must be built on the collective brilliance that resides in the organization. We respectfully facilitate that brilliance. Anything less breeds mediocrity.

“You have to create a culture of trust where everyone feels free to disagree.”

- Rick Wartzman
Executive Director,
Drucker Institute

The pursuit of competitive advantage and extraordinary performance depends on the capacity of the organization to access its innate brilliance. Constantly developing a competitive advantage is a never-ending challenge. It requires collaborative leadership and teamwork across the organization.

The most critical collaboration must be among those in greatest authority – engaging them in brilliance – starting with the CEO, Board Chair and executive team. They set the tone, trajectory and resources. They are responsible for achieving overarching understanding among “all hands” that, in turn, creates a culture in which constructive impertinence is consistently aligned with mission, goals and strategy.



The Five Laws of Brilliance™

In developing a leadership brilliance model, it's important to establish a clear definition of "brilliance" as well as set out the fundamental laws on which we stand in working with our clients to deepen the brilliance of leadership, at every level.

Human brilliance (noun):

The human capacity to feel, think, imagine, create, discover, synthesize and manifest ideas and action into something new; to act, behave and perform at a superior level; to be immersed in a moment of new insight and understanding; to engage collaboration of individual brilliance, transforming it into collective brilliance; to generate new energy, resourcefulness and perspective that changes the status quo. (Antonyms): Mediocrity, average, ordinary, superficial, suboptimal, apathy, lethargy, under performance, uncaring, inhumane.

I observe certain laws shape the geometry and governance of brilliance.

First law:

The higher the purpose, the greater the capacity for brilliance.

Second law:

For every action that creates fear, apprehension and insecurity there is significant and opposite reaction that suppresses brilliance.

Third law:

The degree of brilliance sustained is directly proportional to the degree of respect perceived.

Fourth law:

The level of brilliance never exceeds the level of trust, expectation, acceptance and action allowed, implicitly or explicitly, by the culture of the organization or group.

Fifth law:

The greatest driver of financial performance is the culture's routine for getting to brilliance.



Brilliance Practices

Leaders have been “preaching” about leadership for more than 2,000 years, and yet most do not practice what they preach. Titus Plautus would probably be disappointed, although as a Greek comedic playwright, he might poke fun at us and say, “I told you it couldn’t be done.”

The thing is, practice requires process.

“Practice yourself what you preach.”

-Titus Maccius Plautus (254-184 BC)

At Fritch we do not boast about changing cultures. We partner with leaders to facilitate a process that allows the brilliance in the culture to emerge, be allowed to drive change, and be sustained by collaboration. It’s about creating a culture aligned with a worthy mission, a culture that is free from fear and apprehension, one that engages the people and their brilliance, and fosters a generative attitude that turns the preaching into practice. And achieves performance beyond anything ever imagined.

At Fritch, we facilitate the release of human brilliance in cultures with the aid of three practices.

“Only 21 percent say their organization’s leadership practices are very effective.”

-Bridging the Leadership Gap

Human Resource Executive

1. Getting to Brilliance™

At the heart of true leadership is a higher purpose.

Getting to Brilliance™ presents a comprehensive process for achieving leadership mastery at the top of the culture, where it all begins. It is an offsite summit for Board Chairs and CEOs, and it taps into the human brilliance inherent in their leadership. It explores mastery of nine leadership principles that elevate every culture: higher purpose, core human values, emotional safety, mirroring brilliance, empathy, emulation, insight, wisdom, and community.

Sustained success depends on the level of human performance achieved in each of these requisite fundamentals of human brilliance, which is *the single biggest determinant of organizational performance and competitive advantage.*



2. Getting to Insight™

Seven steps to discovery

Getting to Insight™ is a seven-step process that has been at the core of my practice for 40 years. It is a process available to individuals that is amplified by collaboration within teams, which aligns problem solving at every level with the mission, vision and goals of the enterprise.

1. Mission-orient: associate with your mission.
2. Clarify Intention: identify worthy goals.
3. Gather data: surround yourself with the data.
4. Steep & percolate: immerse yourself in the data.
5. Investigate illuminations: persist along pathways where you sense discovery may be found (repeat steps #3 and 4 as required).
6. Discovery: recognize the insight, record it, articulate it and achieve comprehension.
7. Plan & execute: utilize the insight, protect it and apply it, refining your understanding and wisdom.

“Collectively, brilliance practices are as close to a generative miracle in the workplace as anything I’ve ever discovered.”

3. Getting to Wise Discernment™

Achieving mastery in human business endeavors

- Bruce W. Fritch

Getting to Wise Discernment™ is a process of achieving mastery in human endeavors by honing our natural gifts for mastery. It is a transformational process that moves us from short-term intentions and unconscious mediocrity to responsible mastery by imprinting on our human spirit the gift of wise discernment, which is the capacity to envision, attain and sustain performance at levels previously considered mythic. It is where mindfulness, character and wisdom are cultivated – and emulated to sustain individual mastery and an extraordinary culture.

Brilliance practices are the manifestation of the human brilliance in each of us, the synthesis of information and intuition that advances understanding, capability and confidence. They are practices that produce the *Aha!*, the *Eureka!* moment, the *satori* experience. They are the brilliant flash at the intersection of cognitive comprehension and gut feel.

These sustainable practices are key in building the capability and capacity to access brilliance, at will, every day, at every level.

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