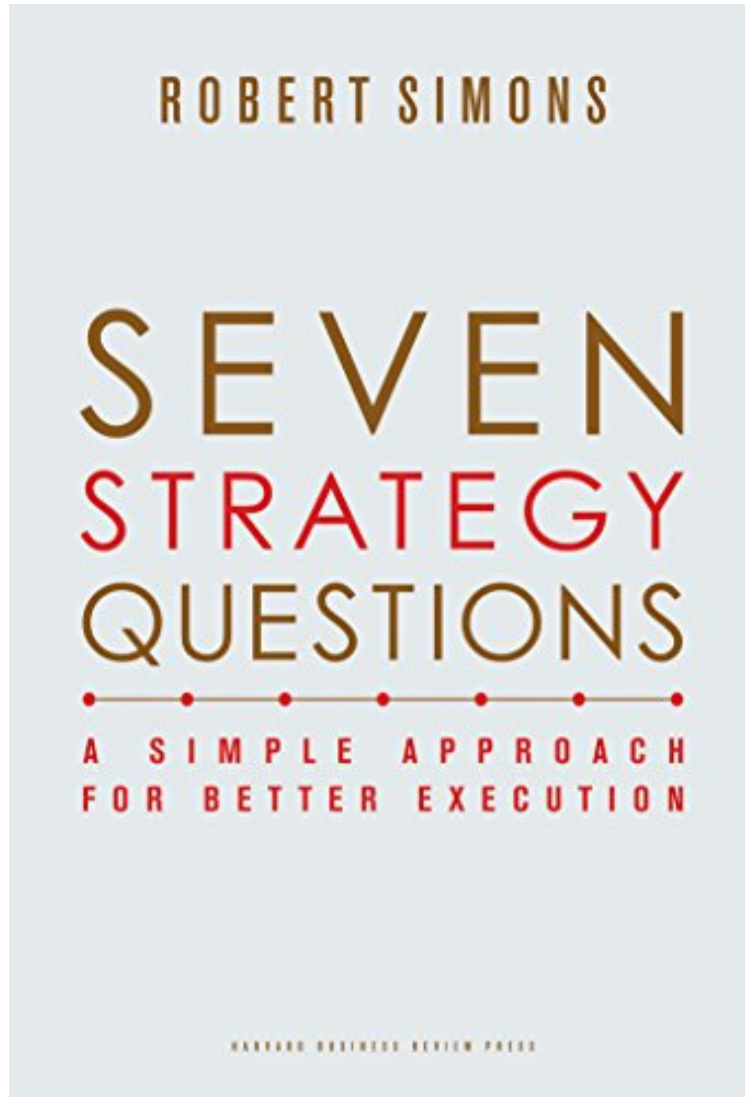


(Ebook free) Seven Strategy Questions: A Simple Approach for Better Execution

# Seven Strategy Questions: A Simple Approach for Better Execution

*Robert Simons*

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**Robert Simons : Seven Strategy Questions: A Simple Approach for Better Execution** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Seven Strategy Questions: A Simple Approach for Better Execution:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. took the view that their customers were primary and have invested heavily making the buying experience as easy and pleasuBy Ian MannPeople leave the strategy retreat with such high hopes and enthusiasm, the strategy is clever and the team is committed. Then something odd happens, nothing is achieved and in no time at all it is back to business as usual.If this sounds familiar it is because it is the more common post-strategy pattern. This is where Prof. Simons's book adds value. After studying strategy implementation for 25 year he has devised a set of seven questions that companies should be asking to ensure that they are clear on how

the strategy will be executed. These questions will also assist in plugging holes in the strategy should they have been overlooked. The first question, "Who is your primary customer?" has its emphasis on the word "primary." The need for clarity on this issue is crucial to the allocation of resources and attention. Primary customers should be given more so that their value can be maximized. Amazon, for example, has two sources of revenue, the suppliers who buy space on its virtual shelves, and the customers who purchase the goods. Amazon took the view that their customers were primary and have invested heavily making the buying experience as easy and pleasurable as possible. That they chose the correct revenue source is indicated by the fact that Amazon has 6% of the entire US retail market. Cisco, in contrast, reinvented itself by making their "channel partners" their primary customers with some 92% of sales comes from these intermediaries. The second question relates to the prioritization of the shareholders, employees and customers. Whose interests should be put first? Simon points out that examples of companies that survive for long periods by putting shareholders first are hard to find. Company needs to give clear priority to either their customers or employees with the latter being the priority mainly in professional service firms. The third question relates to the critical performance variables you need to track. These variables need to be a carefully chosen few, rather than a slew of measures, and must constitute a translation of the strategy into action. More is never better when the issue is the measure to track. This is because management attention is one of a company's scarcest resources, and having too many allows the critical measures to get lost in the overload. The fourth question relates to the boundaries that need to be set to control strategic risk. Toyota is a cited example of what happens when people are under pressure to perform. In their effort to out-produce GM Toyota violated their quality standards with embarrassing results that tarnished their proud reputation for producing cars that "keep going right." Their policy of never building a new product in a new factory with new workforce was sacrificed in the race to become the world's largest manufacturer. Businesses today, more than ever before, need to be creative. So crucial is creativity to survival that the creative process cannot be left to chance. The fifth question is how are you generating creative tension? As Simon rightly points out, creating an environment conducive to creativity and teaching creativity tools has not been shown to produce creative solutions. Competition between units and people, for example, has been shown to be far more effective. No strategy can be executed without a concerted effort from all employees to pursue the strategic objectives. So Simon asks as the sixth question how committed are your employees to helping each other? Collaboration rarely happens without been fostered and actively encouraged. John Chambers of Cisco forces staff to work with people they don't get on with, and famously withheld the bonuses of very senior executives for not being collaborative. Simon's final question is what strategic uncertainties keep you awake at night? The seven questions, asked intensely and sincerely at the end of any strategy formulation or review session, will give impetus to the process. The practical clarity that will emerge from the exercise is certainly worth adding the extra day to your next strategy session.

Readability Light --- Serious Insights High --- Low Practical High +--- Low

Ian Mann of Gateways consults internationally on leadership and strategy

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Practical Sensible and Pivotal

By IN8Too often strategy is seen in a vacuum littered by trendy and essentially weak words. This book is not for the faint of heart or wrigglers wanting to feel good after an all day workshop. This book works and it will make you work. Throw out the others. Purchase Kaplan's Execution Premium for afterwards and just get in with the job of building a winning organisation, a winning industry.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A book that art the very least will reaffirm what you already should be doing...a must read!

By TomWhile I am not sure I would be bold enough to claim this is the ultimate book for developing corporate strategy in a business it is a great start. The seven questions guide you through the process of developing your vision, mission, values, strategic focus, strategic implementation and measures. Not a bad start really but perhaps a little over simplified in execution. Having said that there are some great examples and inspirational anecdotes through the book that alone make it worth reading. Good book, good advice and we are currently using this framework within the business so that says something about how much I liked it!

To stay ahead of the pack, you must translate your organization's competitive strategy into the day-to-day actions carried out in your company. That means channeling resources into the right efforts, achieving the right balance between innovation and control, and getting everyone pulling in the same direction. How to keep all this on track? Identify critical gaps in your strategy execution processes, focus on the most important choices you must make, and understand what's at stake in each one. In this concise guide, Harvard Business School professor Robert Simons presents the seven key questions you and your team must continually ask, beginning now. These questions--including "Who is our primary customer?" "What critical performance variables are we tracking?" and "What strategic uncertainties are keeping us awake at night?"--force you to reexamine the emerging data and unspoken assumptions underlying your strategy and how it's implemented through your business processes and structures. Simons's extensive examples then help you understand your options and position you to make the tough choices needed to excel at execution. Drawing on decades of research into performance management systems and organization design, Seven Strategy Questions is a no-nonsense, must-read resource for all leaders in your organization.

While leaders cannot always have the right answers, they must know how to ask the right questions to drive strategy. Simons captures the power of this leadership approach in a highly inspiring and engaging way. It is essential reading for experienced managers as well as for everyone new to a leadership role."Kasper Rorsted, CEO, Henkel Germany  
Simons's book is a concise reminder of the critical questions that successful CEOs must constantly ask themselves in a rapidly changing world."John Rowe, Chairman and CEO, Exelon Corporation  
Seven Strategy Questions recognizes that every business creates value for customers differently, and sets out a useful framework for challenging strategic assumptions and gaining focus. The book provides invaluable insight for any business leader."Ron Williams, Chairman and CEO, Aetna Inc.  
I highly recommend this book as a must-read for CEOs and other senior executives. Simons has distilled the essence of competing and winning in the marketplace down to seven hard-hitting, high-impact questions that all of us should have in mind as we manage in the unpredictable and much-less-forgiving new normal."Nils Andersen, Group CEO of A.P. Moller-Maersk  
"Simons provides a remarkably insightful path to clarity in defining and executing strategy, guiding us away from distractions and worse. Though closing with a question about what keeps you up at night, this book will help you sleep better."  
Arne M. Sorenson, President and COO, Marriott International