

The Big Lie of Strategic Planning

by Roger L. Martin

January 18, 2018

All executives know strategy is important. But they fear developing a strategy that involves placing bets and making hard choices. So they engage in a more comfortable process of preparing a comprehensive plan—with goals, initiatives, and budgets. This planning process is a terrible way to make strategy.

That's the view of Roger Martin, former dean of the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto and one of the world's leading thinkers on strategy. Martin argues that managers and companies fall into comfort traps when developing strategy. They

- engage in “strategic planning,” which emphasizes planning, not strategic choices;
- focus on cost-based thinking, which makes decisions based on costs and resources, not customers, opportunities, or true strategy; and
- use standard frameworks that prevent organizations from making strategy choices.

Martin advises that developing strategy means going outside an organization’s comfort zone and escaping the common traps of strategic planning. In this webinar, Martin looks at the big lie of strategic planning. He will not only describe the problems with most strategic planning processes but also offer clear rules for avoiding bad strategy. His rules include:

- Keep the strategy statement simple
- Recognize that strategy is not about perfection
- Make the logic explicit

Producing better business results starts with a better way of developing strategy.

Roger L. Martin is a former dean of the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto and strategy adviser to CEOs. He is the author of *When More Is Not Better: Overcoming America’s Obsession with Economic Efficiency* (Harvard Business Review Press, 2020) and coauthor of *Playing to Win: How Strategy Really Works* (Harvard Business Review Press, 2013).