



Gene Siciliano



The Planning Process – A Thumbnail Description

CEOs pay a lot of money to have consultants and advisors help them develop a good strategic plan. Too often they receive a weighty document written largely by the consultant, who then collects his/her check and disappears into the night. Months later they wonder why nothing has really changed.

I met a company CEO awhile back that had such a document. It was impressive in depth and detail, and everything in it was logical and seemed like the right thing to do--for someone, anyway. Of course their staff would need to double in size in order to implement the plan's setup and monitoring requirements and keep up with their burgeoning growth.

As a result, it sat on the CEO's bookshelf as a ready demonstration to visitors how advanced their management team was. My suggestion to greatly simplify the demands and timetables in the plan went unheeded, perhaps because the CEO wasn't willing to acknowledge he had paid too much for too little. The plan never got off the shelf. And we wonder why many CEOs don't trust management consultants.

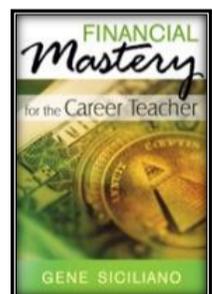


Finance for Non-financial Managers, 2nd Edition, McGraw-Hill 2014, covers

14 key topics in the increasingly demanding world of business finance. This new and significantly expanded revision includes a wealth of new material, following on the heels of the best selling original. Because managers can no longer afford to be non-financial.



Gene brings his extensive financial management acumen and plain language writing style to the world of personal finance with **Financial Mastery for the Career Teacher**,



Corwin Press 2010. Written at the urging of an educational publisher, the guidance and strategies in this book will work for professional

people well beyond the education industry.

Gene Siciliano is the founder and president of Western Management Associates, source of *Your CFO for Rent*® services for over 25 years. The firm provides interim and part-time CFO/Controller services, executive coaching and guidance in operational finance and exit strategy. Gene and his team of seasoned CFOs and controllers have a clear mission in their work with CEOs and owner/operators of privately owned companies. Our value proposition:

- Increase the company's net worth and profitability by improving the management team's financial proficiency and bottom line results, and
- Develop and execute strategies that will make your company more appealing to a buyer or investor, if and when the time comes for an ownership transition.

Top CEOs know that the planning process doesn't stop when a half-pound of paper has been consumed. Rather, they're only halfway across the bridge. There are actually 3 parts to the planning process, and only the complete triad will get you to the other side. Here's how I see those parts:

1. **The Thought Process.** Thinking through exactly what are the strategies that support your corporate mission, and what goals, milestones and actions are most likely needed to fulfill those strategies. This step is the main reason strategic planning facilitators universally recommend off-site retreats. The purpose is to enable the thinking process to unfold without the interruptions that invariably occur at the company's place of business.



2. **The Writing Down Process.** This is an essential step to successful achievement despite the fact that 95% of US companies fail to do it. Much of the writing, at least the drafting, must be done by your top management team, so that understanding and buy-in are unquestioned, even if the final document has been polished and structured by an outside facilitator. Several unique benefits are gained by the writing:

- Clarity, in which ambiguities, inconsistencies and loose ends are easily identified and resolved,
- Roadmap, the clear indication of which paths to take because they are likely to get you closer to your goals, and which ones to avoid because they could take you in the opposite direction,
- Communication, the ability to easily share with others--employees, investors, etc.--a consistent picture of what you have planned, so they can buy into your vision and support the process, and
- Empowerment, because of the ability to more clearly see the steps in the process, you and your managers will gain a stronger belief in the possibilities than you might have had without seeing it in print



3. **The "Using It" Process.** As an operating tool, a step missed by many companies that actually invest in writing a plan. They are instead drawn into the old patterns of decision making on the fly. The reasons are typically either because doing what we've always done feels most familiar, or because the pressures of daily demands from the business seem to require that they take priority over planning.



In this series of steps, you manage your resources to the goals in the plan, periodically measure your progress against the plan, and you regularly ask yourself 3 key questions:

- How are we doing compared to the plan?
- What must we do to have a better result next month/quarter/year?
- What are we learning that will make next year's plan better?

If you don't have the answers to these questions, and that bothers you, it might be time to call for help.

Moral of the Story: A plan not used every day is a truly expensive dust collector. A pattern of unplanned decision making can turn your whole business into a dust collector.

Should you consider doing something today? Yes, yes, and yes!

And if you have decided to get started and you want help doing it, call me. I can help you 310-645-1091 or 888-788-6534.

Or [e-mail me](#) for more information.

Gene Siciliano, *Your CFO for Rent*®

