



# Adventures in Strategy

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# Purpose

- Goal is to explore the Strategy as a viable career for system thinking professionals
- Primary audience is past, current and future students interested in nature of Strategy work
  - Strategy work primarily pertains to management consulting, corporate strategy, general management and closely related careers
- *Goal isn't to talk about how to get into management consulting, or to help choose between firms*

# Speaker Introduction



2010



Scientist,  
Engineer  
&  
Product  
Technologist



Student,  
Intern &  
(Failed)  
Entrepreneur



Management  
Consultant



2015

2017



Corporate  
& Technology  
Strategist

*Currently, Head of Connected  
Vehicle Products & Strategy*

Webinar focus

# Agenda

- **Kickoff (5 min)**
- **Strategy as a destiny (10 min)**  
Introduce the discipline of strategy and its relevance for boardroom officers, for dyed in the wool general managers, for pizza-eating entrepreneurs and for everyone in between
- **Strategy case examples (15 min)**  
Real life examples that are indicative of the work that a typical strategist/ consultant might undertake, highlighting approach, execution and impact
- **Career takeaways (5 min)**  
Reflections from the speaker's years of doing Strategy work. What tends to work in the real world and what does not, and make the link with the MIT SDM education and system thinking focus
- **Getting there (15 min)**
  - **Attributes**  
What we like to see
  - **Preparation- Courses**  
Useful education for the budding strategist
  - **Strategy Resources**  
Tools, books and other resources that help
- **Q&A (10 min)**

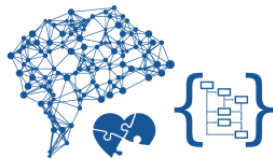
A person stands on a rocky mountain peak, looking out over a vast valley. The valley below is filled with a town, and the surrounding mountains are partially shrouded in mist. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds, and the overall atmosphere is serene and majestic.

**Strategy as a  
destiny**

# The 2020 picture

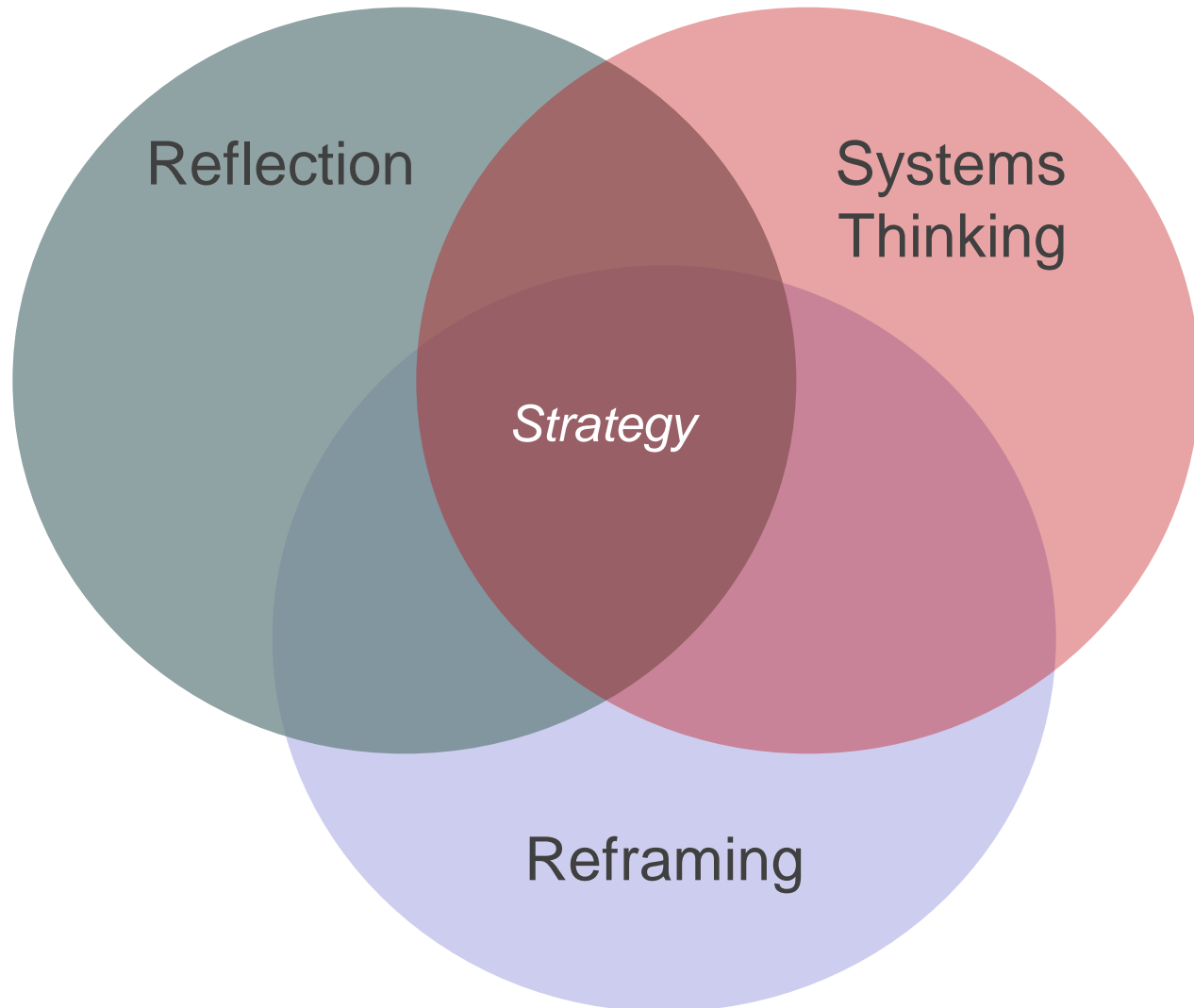
## Top 10 skills

	in 2020		in 2015
	1. Complex Problem Solving		1. Complex Problem Solving
→	2. Critical Thinking	←	2. Coordinating with Others
→	3. Creativity	←	3. People Management
	4. People Management	←	4. Critical Thinking
→	5. Coordinating with Others	←	5. Negotiation
→	6. Emotional Intelligence		6. Quality Control
	7. Judgment and Decision Making	←	7. Service Orientation
→	8. Service Orientation	←	8. Judgment and Decision Making
	9. Negotiation	←	9. Active Listening
	10. Cognitive Flexibility	←	10. Creativity



Source: Future of Jobs Report, World Economic Forum

# Intersection with Systems Thinking

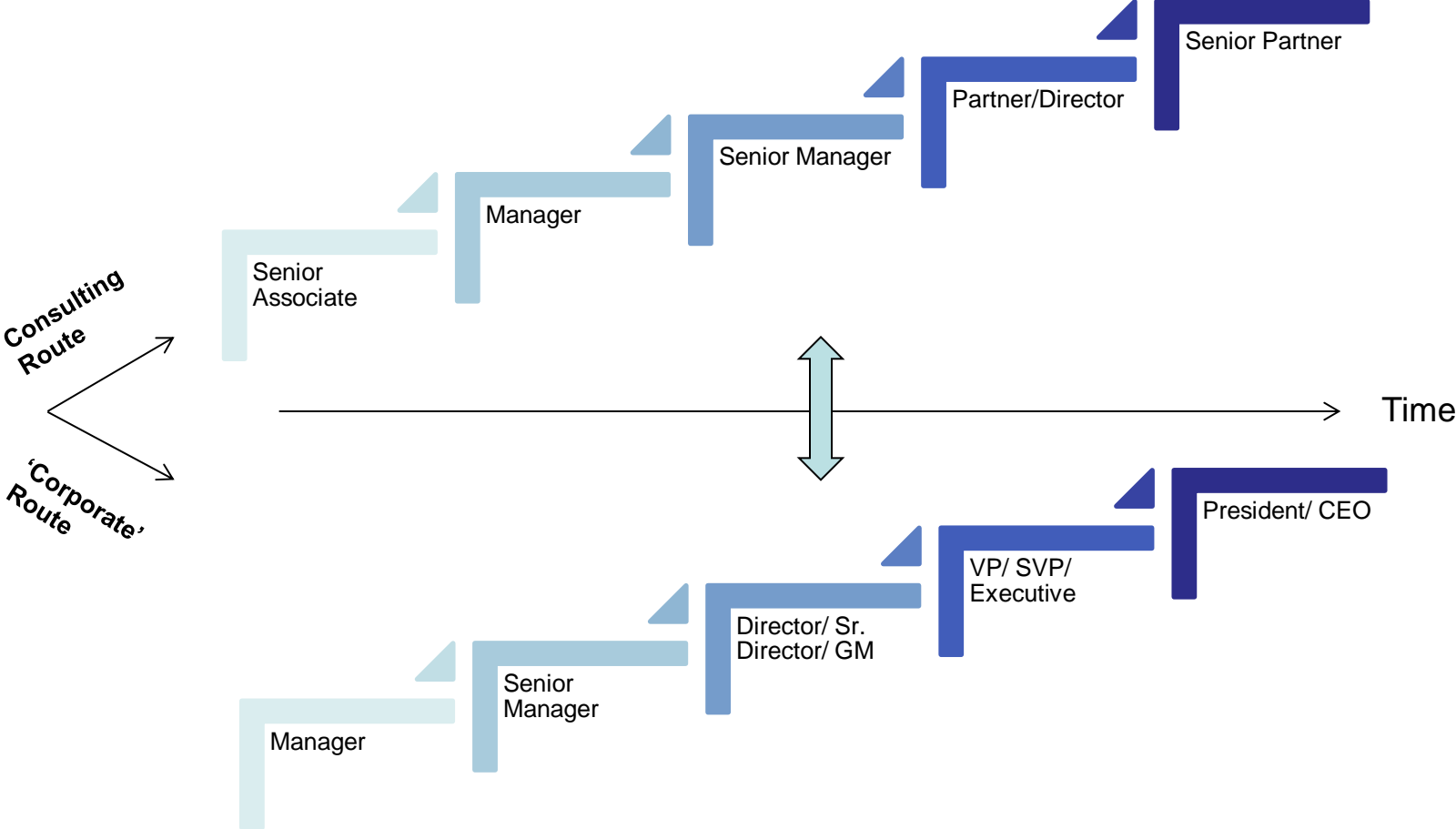


# Why Strategy careers are attractive

- Help companies grow profitably amidst competition and constant change
  - Continuation of your MBA/SDM training
  - Dynamic and cerebral work
- Understand part, present and future by creating and evaluating plans
  - Forecasting, market analysis, M&A, vendor relations, supply chain issues, geo expansion, ...
  - Lead important projects/ initiatives
  - All round skill development
- Strategy is amongst the most desirable career paths within large organizations
  - Excellent visibility to leadership and insight into decision making
- Not uncommon for CSOs to become CEOs



# Strategy Career Paths





# Strategy Case Examples

# #1. Telco Giant in the Cloud



## Engagement

F100 Telco bought a set of Cloud assets and wished to evaluate various go to market strategies and business models

## Setting

- 2 month fixed price engagement in New Jersey in 2012
- 6 person team (Partner, Sr. Mgr, Mgr., myself and 2 consultants)

## Approach

- Analyzed Cloud market and identified unmet opportunities
- Prioritized top use cases in Financial, Retail and Govt.
- Created solution playbook with clear go to market guidelines

## Impact

- Client created \$100M Cloud business based on playbook and opened growing revenue streams
- Engagement generated several follow on sales opportunities

### *Memorable moments*

- Picking up Dominos pizza at midnight
- First F100 boardroom exposure
- Understanding how consulting teams function

## #2. Oil & Gas Company Divestiture



### Engagement

F50 Oil & Gas company that split into two entities (upstream and downstream) needed assistance with planning IT operations as well as with licensing contracts

### Setting

- 5 month T&M engagement somewhere deep in Oklahoma
- 12 person team (Sr. Mgr, Mgr., myself, 5 consultants, 4 analysts)

### Approach

- Team split up into IT Operations Planning and Licensing Mgmt.
- Licensing Mgmt. (my team) analyzed existing contracts and recommended ways to optimize

### Impact

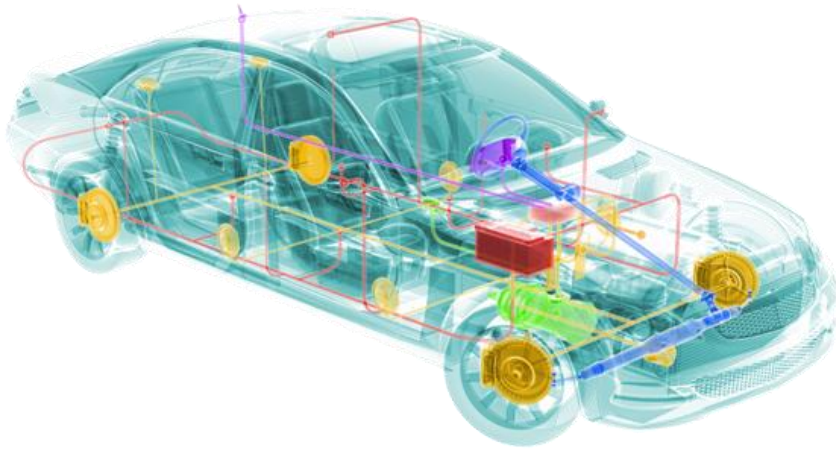
- \$70M in y-o-y savings from redundant licensing

#### *Memorable moments*

- Realizing that open-endedness = long project
- First time in a private jet
- Oil & Gas wasn't for me

*Note: Client/ Firm information and facts presented are for illustrative purpose only. No confidential information shown.*

## #3. Tier 1 Automotive Supplier Outsourcing a Business



### Engagement

F500 Auto Tier 1 was going through financial strife and was restructuring. Client brought in Deloitte to outsource the function of an internal shared services business unit

### Setting

- 3 month fixed bid engagement in Detroit (team stayed in Ann Arbor)
- 3 person team (Sr. Mgr, Sr. Consultant and Analyst)

### Approach

- Team evaluated several external service providers
- Modeled financial impact of outsourcing the business
- Recommended options to pursue based on cultural fit

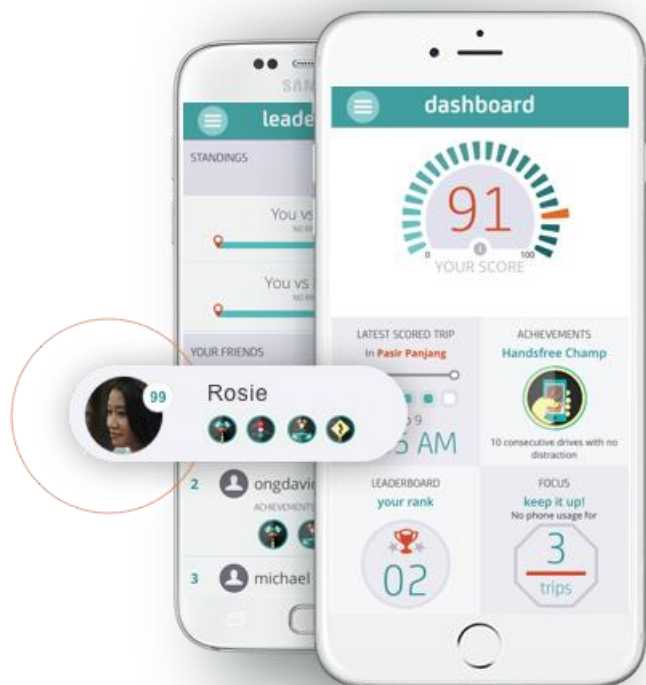
### Impact

- \$130M was written off of client's books from the successful outsourcing operation

#### *Memorable moments*

- Impact of competition on US mfg. jobs
- First time leading a project
- Learning complex financial modeling

## #4. Leading Insurance Provider Studying Driver Behavior



### Engagement

F500 Auto Insurance Provider wanted to get into usage based telematics (OBD-II sensors transmit driver behavior ultimately influencing auto insurance policy premiums)

### Setting

- 3 month fixed bid engagement in NYC (team @ the Monitor offices in downtown Manhattan)
- 6 person team (Partner, Sr. Mgr, 2x Sr. Consultants and 2x Analysts)

### Approach

- Created the base business flows and monetization models
- Prototyped AWS based Big Data architecture with Tech team
- Validated concept w/ mobile app and stood up beta testing team

### Impact

- Solution was deployed but insurance carrier found that the US privacy-led market wasn't ready for usage based telematics

#### Memorable moments

- Learning Cloud/Mobile/Big Data architectures
- Manhattan on a (generous) expense account
- Great consulting team != great product

*Note: Client/ Firm information and facts presented are for illustrative purpose only. No confidential information shown.*

## #5. Canadian Communications Co.- TV Experience



### Engagement

Canada's leading Communications provider brought in IBB to assess pricing, features w.r.t competition and recommend second screen strategy

### Setting

- 3 month fixed bid engagement in Toronto
- 5 person team (2 directors, myself and 2 consultants)

### Approach

- Analyzed competitive threats in local market and current pricing
- Based on market direction, recommended hot list of new features to implement covering second screen across PC & Xbox

### Impact

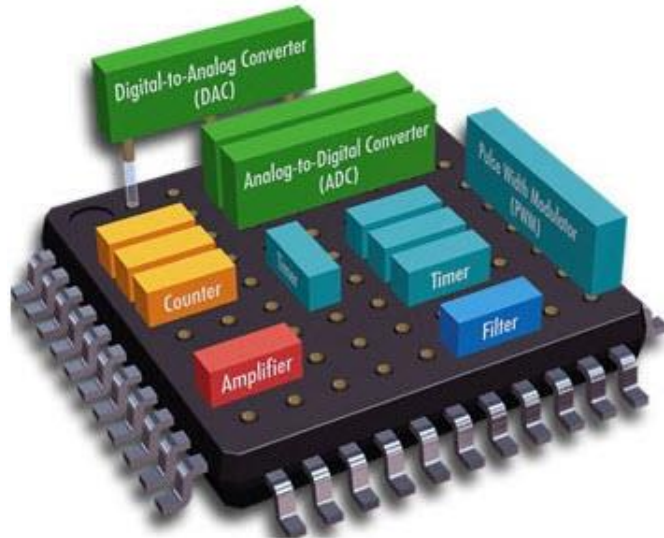
- Second screen solution was taken into implementation.
- New features introduced in 2014 consistent with recommendations

#### *Memorable moments*

- Walking through TV post production studios
- Working alongside green haired UI/ UX designers

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## #6. Game-boarding Market Scenarios for an Intel Business Unit



### Engagement

Wind River's president asked me to arrange a strategic game boarding exercise to evaluate different market scenarios in anticipation of a competitive threat to a business unit

### Setting

- 2 weeks of content preparation- teamed up with M&A head
- 1 week of pre-work with attendees facilitated through online tool

### Approach

- Synthesized pertinent findings from available market research
- Designed workshop including hands on exercises and facilitated pre-work. Ran workshop, and followed up on findings

### Impact

- Impacted BU has made a couple of significant pivots in anticipation of identified threats

#### *Memorable moments*

- Anticipating a trend and actually seeing it live
- When data talks- eliciting a collective 'aha' from executives

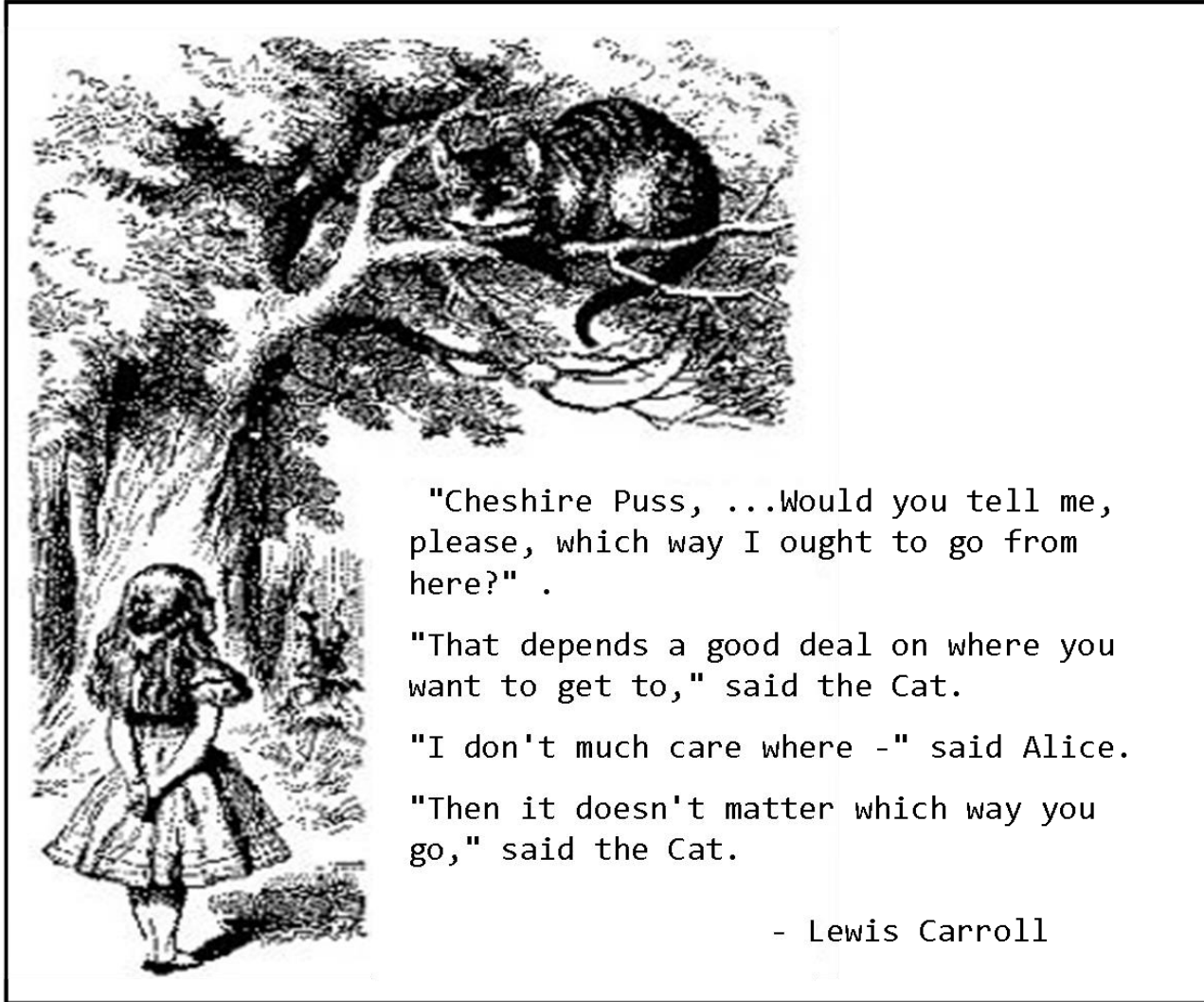
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# Reflections

# Have a hypothesis



"Cheshire Puss, ...Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?" .

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.

"I don't much care where -" said Alice.

"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat.

- Lewis Carroll

# Reflections over a 6 year strategy career

- Learn to solve problems quickly
  - Hypothesis driven problem solving
  - Strategists dream in 2x2 matrices
  - Know your frameworks cold
- The Service mindset
  - Trusted advisor
- Bring people along with you
  - The answer doesn't matter as much as the journey
- Structure, structure, structure!

## *If going the consulting route*

- Look beyond just firm prestige and starting pay
  - Types of projects
  - Location, lifestyle
  - Firm culture
  - Leadership- work with people that you admire

## *If going the corporate route:*

- Don't look for Strategy jobs outside the ~Fortune 1000
  - Do look to get into rotational leadership opportunities

# Strategist Attributes



## STRATEGIC THINKING

Understand the complex relationship between the organization and its environment



## STRATEGIC ACTING

Take decisive action consistent with the strategic direction of the organization



## STRATEGIC INFLUENCING

Build commitment to the organization's direction by inviting others to the strategic process



**Getting There**

# Making the shift

## TACTICAL

FOCUSED ON DELIVERABLES  
CHOOSES STEPS + PROCESSES  
"WE CANT DO IT THAT WAY"  
DISPUTES TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

"THAT'S NOT MY JOB"

CREATES PLAN TO REACH GOAL

OUR ACTIVITIES SUPPORTS  
OUR CULTURE

# Things to work on during school



## Pro-bono Consulting

- Local companies
- Non profit



## Networking

- Local meetups
- Conferences
- Company visits



## Eminence

- Passion around a few areas
- Follow analysts & trends
- Become expert at something!



## Training

- Classes/ Internships
- Case Interviews



*Team Skills!*

# Coursework

## Foundation

Competitive Strategy

Operations & Supply Chain

Fin. Statement Analysis

Organizational Management

Managerial Finance

Technology Strategy

Microeconomics

Risk-Decision & Optimization

Leadership Communication

Disruptive Innovation

Product Management

Marketing

## Nice to Have

Adv. Strategic Management

Business Law

System Dynamics

System Architecture

Product Design & Development

Business Law

Global Strategy

## Optional

Power and Negotiation

Corporate Finance

PE, Mergers, & Acquisitions

Macroeconomics

Business Accounting

Analytics

Technology Sales



# People that I follow



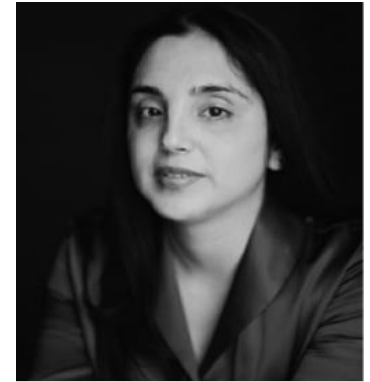
Simon Simonek  
"Why?"



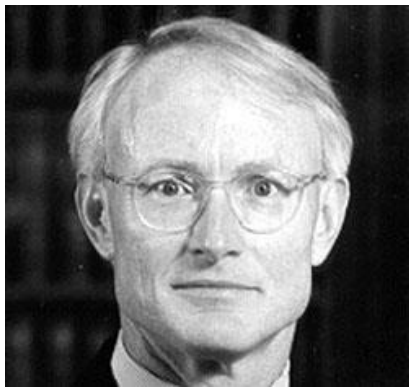
Geoffrey Moore  
"Chasm"



Jim Collins  
"Good to Great"



Sheena Iyengar  
"Choosing"



Michael Porter  
"Competition"



Genevieve Bell  
"Anthropology"



Peter Levine  
"SW Business Models"



Paul Krugman  
"Cost of Business"

# On my bookshself

Context

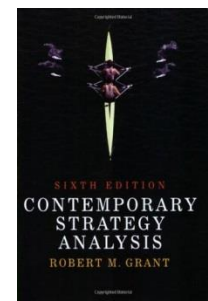
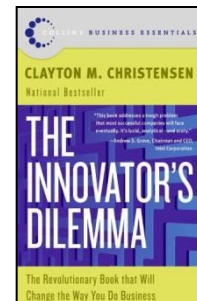
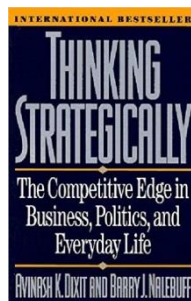
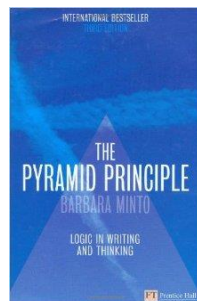
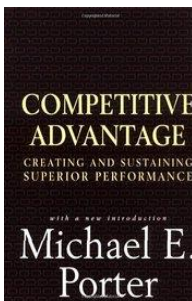
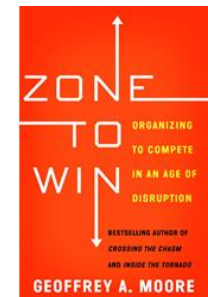
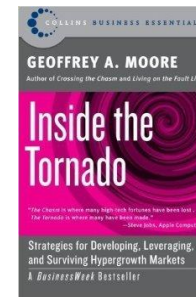
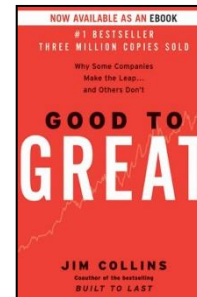
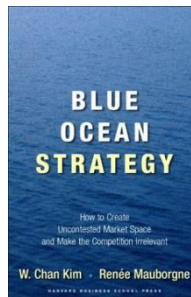
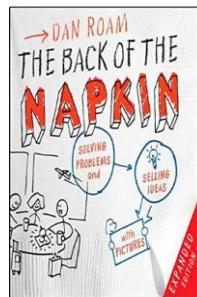
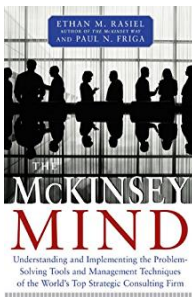
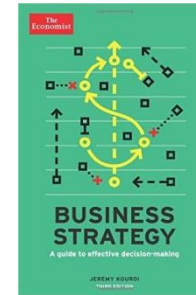
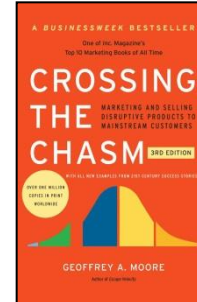
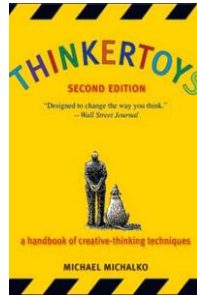
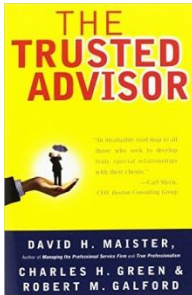
Mindset

Theory

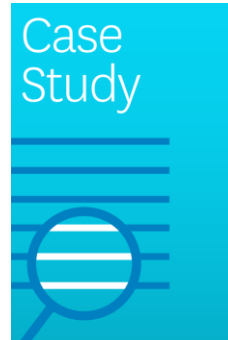
Planning

Execution

Followthrough



# Resources



**Thank you!**

- Q&A