DEFINING AND DELIVERING MEASURABLE VALUE: A MEGA THINKING AND PLANNING PRIMER

Roger Kaufman, CPT, PhD

Abstract

Mega planning has a primary focus on adding value for all stakeholders. It is realistic, practical, and ethical. Defining and then achieving sustained organizational success is possible. It relies on three basic elements:

1. A societal value-added “frame of mind” or paradigm: your perspective about your organization, people, and our world. It focuses on an agreed-upon focus on adding value to all stakeholders.
2. A shared determination and agreement on where to head and why: all people who can and might be impacted by the shared objectives must agree on purposes and results criteria, and
3. Pragmatic and basic tools.

This article provides the basic concepts for thinking and planning Mega in order to define and deliver value to internal and external partners.

The Societal Value Added Perspective and Frame of Mind

The required frame of mind for Mega thinking and planning, one’s guiding paradigm, is simple, straightforward, and sensible. It puts a primary concern on adding measurable value for external clients and society using one’s own job and organization as the vehicle. From this shared societal value-added frame1, everything one uses, does, produces, and delivers is linked to achieve shared and agreed-upon positive societal results. This societal frame of reference, or paradigm, I call the Mega level of planning.2

If you are not adding value to our shared society what assurance do you have that you are not subtracting value?1 Starting with Mega as the central focus is strategic thinking and provides the data based for strategic planning.

A central question that each and every organization should ask and answer is:

1 The process for defining and using Mega relies on the democratic process of all persons who could be impacted by the definition of Mega coming to agreement.
2 In some writings, “social value” formal considerations are limited to adding value to the associates working within the organization and thus might be missing the external social value suggested in Mega thinking and planning (Jan. 10, 2005).
If Your Organization is the Solution, What’s the Problem?

This fundamental proposition is central to thinking and planning strategically—using a Mega focus—represents a shift from the usual focus only on oneself, individual performance improvement, and one’s organization to making certain you also add value to external clients and society.

An Overview of the Basic Concepts and Tools for Mega Planning

There are three basic guides, or templates, that will be helpful to define and achieve organizational success. Each is defined in much greater detail in several books (see the references), but for our entry into Mega Planning and strategic thinking, here is the short introduction to these three guides:

Guide One: The Organizational Elements Model (OEM) –Table 1--defines and links-aligns—what any organization uses, does, produces, and delivers with external client and societal value added. For each Element, there is an associated level of planning. Note that Strategic planning (and thinking) starts with Mega while Tactical planning starts with Macro and Operational planning at Micro.

Table 1. The five levels of results, the levels of planning, and a brief description.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Organizational Element</th>
<th>Name of the Level of Planning and Focus</th>
<th>Brief Description</th>
<th>Type of Planning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Mega</td>
<td>Results and their consequences for external clients and society (shared vision)</td>
<td>Strategic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outputs</td>
<td>Macro</td>
<td>The results an organization can or does deliver outside of itself</td>
<td>Tactical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Products</td>
<td>Micro</td>
<td>The building block results that are produced within the organization</td>
<td>Operational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processes</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>The ways, means, activities, procedures, methods used internally</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inputs</td>
<td>Input</td>
<td>The human, physical, financial resources an organization can or does use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These elements are also useful for defining the basic questions every organization must ask and answer as provided in Figure 2.

Guide Three: Six Critical Success Factors. Following are what provides a vital framework of this approach and for Mega planning, Unlike conventional
“critical success factors,” these are factors for successful planning, not just for the things that an organization must get done to meet its mission. These are for Mega planning, regardless of the organization.

**Six Critical Success Factors (CSFs) for any organization**

Six critical success factors for Mega planning (not targeted for any one organizational business but only for the planning process and concern) are shown in Table 2.

*Table 2. The six critical success factors for Mega level strategic planning (and strategic thinking).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Move out of your comfort zone - today’s paradigms- and use new and wider boundaries for thinking, planning, doing, evaluating, and continuous improvement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Differentiate between ends (what) and means (how).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use all three levels of planning and results (Mega/Outcomes; Macro/Outputs; Micro/Products).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepare all objectives - including the Ideal Vision and mission - to include precise statements of both where you are headed as well as the criteria for measuring when you have arrived. Develop “Smarter” Objectives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use an Ideal Vision (what kind of world, in measurable performance terms, we want for tomorrow’s child) as the underlying basis for planning and continuous improvement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR 6 |
Defining “need” as a gap in results (not as insufficient levels of resources, means or methods.

Guide Three: A six-step problem solving model, Figure 1 that includes (1.0) identifying problems based on needs, (2.0) determining detailed solution requirements and identifying (but not yet selecting) solution alternatives, (3.0) selecting solutions from among alternatives, (4.0) implementation, (5.0) evaluation and (6.0) continuous improvement (at each and every step):

Figure . The six-step problem solving process: A process for identifying and resolving problems (and identifying opportunities).


Each time you want to identify problems and opportunities and systematically get from current results and consequences to desired ones, use the six-step process.

New Realities for Organizational Success. To be successful—to do and apply Mega Planning—you have to realize that yesterday’s methods and results often are not appropriate for tomorrow. Most planning experts agree that the past is only prologue, and tomorrow must be crafted through new patterns of perspectives, tools, and results. The tools and concepts for meeting the new realities of society, organizations, and people are linked to each of the Six Critical Success Factors.

The details and how-to’s for each of the three guides are also provided in the referenced sources. The three basic “guides” or templates should be considered as forming an integrated set of tools—like a fabric—instead of only each one on their own.

Mega Planning. A Mega Planning framework has three phases: Scoping, Planning, Implementation/Continuous Improvement. From this framework, specific tools and methods are provided to do Mega Planning. It is
not complex, really. If you simply use the three guides you will be able to put it all together.
When doing Mega planning, you and your associates will ask and answered the following questions shown in Table 3.

Table 3. The basic questions every organization must ask and answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>SELF ASSESSMENT</th>
<th>ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you commit to deliver organizational results that add value for all external clients AND society? (Mega/Outcomes)</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you commit to deliver organizational results that have the measurable quality required by your external clients? (Macro/Outputs)</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do you commit to produce internal results—including your job and direct responsibilities—that have the measurable quality required by your internal partners? (Micro/Products)</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do you commit to having efficient internal processes?</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Do you commit to acquire and use quality—appropriate--human capital, information capital and physical resources?</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A "yes" to all questions will lead you toward Mega planning and allow you to prove that you have added value. . . something that is becoming increasingly important. These questions relate to Guide One. It defines each organizational element in terms of its label and the question each addresses. If you use and do all of these you will align everything you use, do, produce, and deliver to adding measurable value to yourself, your organization, and to external clients and society.

Mega planning is proactive. Many approaches to organizational improvement wait for problems to happen and then scramble to respond. But there is a temptation to react to problems and never take the time to plan so surprises are fewer and success is defined—before problems spring up—and then systematically achieved.

The Six Critical Success Factors in Brief

Let’s look at each of the Six Critical Success Factors –Guide Three—briefly—each will form the basis of a chapter following this Introduction—to get a feel for the frame of mind (or paradigm) Mega planning provides.

**Critical Success Factor 1. USE NEW AND WIDER BOUNDARIES FOR THINKING, PLANNING, DOING, AND EVALUATING/CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT. MOVE OUT OF TODAY’S COMFORT ZONES**

There is evidence just about everywhere we look that tomorrow is not a linear projection—a straight-line function—of yesterday and today. . .such as car manufacturers that squander their dominant client base by shoving unacceptable...
vehicles into the market and airlines that focus on shareholder value and ignore
customer value. An increasing number of credible authors have been, and
continue to tell us that the past is, at best, prologue and not a harbinger of what
the future will be. In fact, old paradigms can be so deceptive that Tom Peters
suggests that “organizational forgetting” must become conventional
organizational culture.v

Times have changed, and anyone who doesn’t also change appropriately
is risking failure. It is vital to use new and wider boundaries for thinking, planning,
doing, and delivering. Doing so will require getting out of current comfort zones.
Not doing so will likely deliver failurevi.

Critical Success Factor 2. DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN ENDS AND
MEANS. FOCUS ON “WHAT” (Mega/Outcomes, Macro/Outputs,
Micro/Products) BEFORE “HOW.”vii

People, are “doing-types.” We want to swing right into action and in so
doing we usually jump right into solutions—means—before we know the
results—ends—we must deliver. Writing and using measurable performance
objectives is something upon which almost all performance improvement authors
agree. Objectives correctly focus on ends and not methods, means, or
resources.viii Ends—“What”—sensibly should be identified and defined before we
select “How” to get from where we are to our destinations. If we don’t select our
solutions, methods, resources, and interventions on the basis of what results we
are to achieve, what do we have in mind to make the selections of means,
resources, or activities?

Focusing on means, processes, and activities are usually more
comfortable as a starting place for conventional performance improvement
initiatives. Starting with means, for any organization and performance
improvement initiative, would be as if you were provided process tools and
techniques without a clear map that included a definite destination identified
(along with a statement of why you want to get to the destination in the first
place). Also, a risk for starting a performance improvement journey with means
and processes would be the fact that there would be no way of knowing whether
your trip is taking you toward a useful destination or the criteria for telling you if
you were making progress.ix

It is vital that successful planning focuses first on results—useful
performance in measurable terms—for setting its purposes, measuring progress
and providing continuous improvement toward the important results, and for
determining what to keep, what to fix, and what to abandon.

It is vital to focus on useful ends before deciding “how” to get things done.
It also sets the stage for another related Critical Success Factor (#3, Use and
Link all Three Levels of Results) through application of the Organizational
Elements Model (OEM) and for Critical Success Factor #4 (Prepare objectives
that have indicators of how you will know when you have arrived). The OEM
relies on a results-focus because it defines what every organization uses, does, produces, delivers, and the consequences of that for external clients and society.

**Critical Success Factor 3: Use and Align all three levels of Planning and Results.**

As we noted in Critical Success Factor 2 (above), it is vital to prepare all objectives that focus only on ends...never just on means or resources. There are three levels of results, shown in Table 4, that are important to target and link:

*Table 4. The levels of planning and results that should be linked during planning, doing, and evaluation and continuous improvement and there are three levels of planning.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIMARY CLIENT AND BENEFICIARY</th>
<th>NAME FOR THE LEVEL OF PLANNING</th>
<th>NAME FOR THE LEVEL OF RESULT</th>
<th>TYPE OF PLANNING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Society and External Clients</td>
<td>Mega</td>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Strategic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Organization Itself</td>
<td>Macro</td>
<td>Outputs</td>
<td>Tactical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals and Small Groups</td>
<td>Micro</td>
<td>Products</td>
<td>Operational</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are three levels of planning and results, based on who is to be the primary client and beneficiary of what gets planned, designed, and delivered. For each level of planning there are associated three levels of results (Outcomes, Outputs, Products). *Strategic planning* targets society and external clients, *tactical planning* targets the organization itself, and *operational planning* targets individuals and small groups.

**Critical Success Factor 4: PREPARE OBJECTIVES—INCLUDING THOSE FOR THE IDEAL VISION AND MISSION OBJECTIVES—that have indicators of how you will know when you have arrived. (Mission Statement Plus Success Criteria)**

It is vital to state, precisely, measurable, and rigorously, where you are headed and how to tell when you have arrived. Statements of objectives must be in performance terms so that one can plan how best to get there, how to measure progress toward the end, and how to note progress toward it.

Objectives, at all levels of planning, activity, and results, are absolutely vital. And everything is measurable, so don’t kid yourself into thinking you can dismiss important results as being “intangible” or “non-measurable.” It is only sensible and rationale to make a commitment to measurable purposes and destinations. Increasingly organizations throughout the world are increasingly focusing on Mega-level results.

**Critical Success Factor 5: DEFINE “NEED” AS A GAP BETWEEN CURRENT AND DESIRED RESULTS (Not as Insufficient Levels of Resources, Means, or Methods)**

---

© rkaufman, 2005

**Originally appeared in:**

Conventional English-language usage would have us employ the common world “need” as a verb (or in a verb sense) . . . to identify means, methods, activities, and actions and/or resources we desire or intend to use.xiv Terms such as “need to,” “need for,” “needing,” and “needed” are common, conventional, and destructive to useful planning. What?

As hard as it is to change our own behavior (and most of us who want others to change seem to resist it the most ourselves!) it is central to useful planning to distinguish between Ends and Means. We have already noted this as Critical Success Factor 2. In order to do reasonable and justifiable planning we have to (1) focus on Ends and not Means, and thus (2) use “need” as a noun. Need, for the sake of useful and successful planning is only used as a noun, as a gap between current and desired results.

If we use need as a noun, we will be able to not only justify useful objectives but we will also be able to justify what we do and deliver on the basis of costs-consequences analysis. We will be able to justify everything we use, do, produce, and deliver. It is the only sensible way we can demonstrate value added.

Critical Success Factor 6: USE AN IDEAL VISION AS THE UNDERLYING BASIS FOR ALL PLANNING AND DOING (Don’t Be Limited to Your Own Organization)

Here is another area that requires some change from the conventional ways of doing planning.

An Ideal Vision is never prepared for an organization, but rather identifies the kind of world we want to help create for tomorrow’s child. From this societal-linked Ideal Vision, each organization can identify what part or parts of the Ideal Vision we commit to deliver and move ever-closer toward. If we base all planning and doing on an Ideal Vision of the kind of society we want for future generation, we can achieve “strategic alignment” for what we use, do, produce, deliver, and the external payoffs for our Outputs.

So? Mega thinking and planning is about defining a shared success, achieving it, and being able to prove it. Mega thinking and planning is a focus not on one’s organization alone but upon society now and in the future. It is about adding measurable value to all stakeholders.

Mega thinking and planning has been offered for many years, perhaps first formally with Kaufman’s 1972 *Educational System Planning* and further developed in Kaufman & English, 1979, and continuing through 2005. In one form another, using a societal frame for planning and doing has shown up in the works of respected thinkers, including Senge (1990) and more recently Prahalad (2005). For some reason, there continues to be some resistance to Mega thinking and planning; a resistance that seems to be increasingly evaporating as witnessed by the articles in this Special Issue of PIQ and indeed other professional contributions around the world. I that there continues this migration from individual performance as the preferred unit of analysis for performance
improvement to one that includes a first consideration of society and external stakeholders; It is responsible, responsive, and ethical to add value to all.

Some Basic References


Roger Kaufman, CPT, PhD is Professor Emeritus, Educational Psychology and Learning Systems, Florida State University. He is also Distinguished Research Professor, Sonora Institute of Technology. He is past president as well as member for life and the recipient of the Thomas Gilbert Award, ISPI. He has recently been recognized by ASTD for Distinguished Contribution to Workplace Learning and Development. He consults world-wide and is the author of 36 books and over 235 articles on strategic planning, needs assessment, and evaluation.

---

1 Not all people see merit (and some even see danger) in using a Mega focus (Schneider, 2003; Winiecki (2004). Along with others, including Brethower (2005) I find such objections to be either wrong or naive.

2 Please realize that unlike many other presentations of critical success factors, these relate to any organization and should be generalized to any organization, public or private. Most "critical success factors" discussed in the management literature refer to organization-specific factors related to their unique business. These apply to any organization and are “above” any organizational-specific factors.

3 Most planning experts now agree. I first proposed using a societal frame of reference as the primary focus for individuals and organizations in 1968 and 1969 (which brought alarm and suspicion on the part of many “old paradigm thinkers”). But I have recently been joined in this call for such new paradigms by many future-oriented thinkers including (but not limited to) those included in the references in this Introduction.

This shift in thinking to new paradigms—frames of reference that are radically different from the “conventional wisdom”—are sprouting as Joel Barker suggested that they would when seen by the “Paradigm Pioneers” of our world. Please review these references that are noted with a “•”
before them. These references particularly focus on new paradigms for Mega Planning and are fundamental to the major thrusts and suggestions of this book.

iv Of course, each one is valuable. But used together they are even more powerful.


vi Again, in Peters, 1997, he states that it is easier to kill an organization than it is to change it.

vii It might seem as if there are a bunch of new words—jargon—flowing at you now. And there are. Please be patient. Each will be defined, justified, and related on to the others. The distinctions are important.

viii Bob Mager set the original standard for measurable objectives. Later, Tom Gilbert made the important distinction between behavior and performance (between actions and consequences). Recently, some “Constructivists” have had objections to writing objectives because they claim it can cut down on creativity and imposes the planner’s values on the clients. This view, I believe, is not useful. For a detailed discussion on the topic of Constructivism, please see the analysis of philosophy professor David Gruender, 1996:May-June.

ix Jan Kaufman provided this insight.

x It is interesting and curious that in the popular literature, ALL results tend to be called “outcomes.” This failure to distinguish among three levels of results blurs the importance of identifying and linking all three levels in planning, doing, and evaluating/continuous improvement.

xi An important contribution of strategic planning at the Mega level is that objectives can be linked to justifiable purpose. Not only should one have objectives that state “where you are headed and how you will know when you have arrived,” they should also be justified on the basis of “why you want to get to where you are headed.” While it is true that objectives only deal with measurable destinations, useful strategic planning adds the reasons why objectives should be attained.

xii Note that this CSF also relates to CSF#2.


xiv Because most dictionaries provide common usage not necessarily correct usage, they note that “need” is used as a noun as well as a verb. This dual conventional usage doesn’t mean that it is useful. Much of this book depends on a shift in paradigms about “need.” The shift is to use it only as a noun . . . never as a verb or in a verb sense.