



Question No. 8 to develop your safety excellence strategy

Which initiatives will best support your objectives? Dr. Larry Brilliant's 2006 TED talk proposed a way to eradicate diseases in the world through what he calls "early detection, early response." When choosing a strategic intervention, it makes

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sense to look for one with small input but large beneficial output. What strategic intervention will have the most effect, be easiest to implement and, at the same time, be aligned with your strategic goals and your company and customer values?

If you want different results, you must choose to do something, or to stop doing something. Either way, choosing is an active decision, because even not choosing is a

choice. As mentioned in the previous article of this series, "Question No. 7: What data-driven priorities and objectives are of strategic value?" data should inform your decision. But data alone will not make the decision for you. You have to take into consideration how likely your approach is to be supported and how well it will fit with your existing processes. What's important is to consider your choice in the light of cultural acceptability. If you have prospective interventions that clearly won't play nicely with your culture, then reconsider them. Choosing narrows future options, eliminating all but a few. Choose wisely.

The following questions will help you answer No. 8 in your strategy development processes: Are your choices aligned with the values of your organization? Do you have relevant data? How will you use the data you have collected? How do you currently go about the process of deciding? Do managers make it safe for people to be wrong? What are the consequences of being wrong? What are your expectations of being right? How does your culture tolerate or encourage dissent? Who will you include in the decision-making

process? Who will you exclude from your decision-making process? Who else could give you input you need? What expertise will help you decide? What are you willing to give up? Who and what might you be overlooking? Are you identifying low-hanging fruit? Are your choices supported by data or opinions? What can you stop doing? What is the most effective choice you can make? What will you do when you make a wrong choice? How willing are you to make tradeoffs? What are they? What are your criteria for choosing? Are you chasing too many priorities? How will you decide what not to do? How did you go about making choices in the past? What have you learned?

As Ken Robinson says, "No one can tell what the future will bring in five years' time." But we need to make provisions for likelihoods. Strategy is your best educated guess on how you want the future to unfold. Essentially, strategy works with what you have by imagining how you can create more value, and then sets about making it happen.

Today, technical tools help us better predict probabilities of future events, but predictions are hardly reliable, as recent election

polls demonstrated. A few years ago, pollsters failed miserably to predict elections in Israel, the United Kingdom, Poland and the United States. Then there is always the Black Swan event: an unlikely occurrence you didn't see coming. In light of all of this, which initiatives will best support your objectives? Upcoming articles will focus on the two remaining questions that must be asked and answered to create your safety excellence strategy.

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