THE FOUR FACES OF STRATEGY

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The definitive guide to the different facets of strategic planning (with tongue, ever so slightly, in cheek).
Category: Observations

For one reason or another, I've been thinking about strategy over the last few days. This could be mission agency strategy, church strategy or any other strategy come to think of it. I reckon there are four key dimensions to understanding any strategic plan.

The Official Strategy: the official strategy is developed over a number of sessions, using flip charts, breakout groups, post-it notes and coloured pens. Eventually all of the exciting ideas are condensed into an elegant document which is rolled out to great acclaim, then filed somewhere and conveniently forgotten.

The Commonly Believed Strategy: this is what everyone actually believes to be the strategy of the organisation. Some bits of it may be in the official strategy and others were in the official strategy ten years ago but were found to be impractical.

The Practical Strategy: this is what the organisation actually does. It may resemble the official strategy, but is more likely to resemble the commonly believed strategy, but is even more likely to have nothing to do with either of them.

What the Organisation Should Actually Do: any resemblance between this and any of the above is purely accidental.

OK, I'm being a tad cynical. However, there is a serious point here. Strategic planning needs to be rooted in the real world, well explained to those involved inÂ implementingÂ it and above all, it needs to be put into practice.Â