

Stop Oversimplifying Strategy

Strategy sets the direction for your company. It's not decoration, and it's not optional. It defines what you will do—and just as importantly, what you will not. Get it wrong and failure follows. Get it right and you at least have a fighting chance.

Every entrepreneur, executive, and board chair is responsible for shaping, executing, and evaluating strategy. Yet the evidence is sobering: 60–90% of strategies never get implemented or collapse outright. That's not because leaders are lazy or incompetent. It's because building a sound strategy is harder than it looks.

So why do so many books, workshops, and advisors sell “Strategy Made Easy” or “Strategy in Minutes”? Probably because it's comforting. Thinking deeply is demanding. *“Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is why so few engage in it.”* (attributed to Henry Ford)

The truth: strategy is hard. But hard does not mean complicated or bloated. It doesn't require endless meetings or thick binders. What it does require is clarity. You must separate strategy from planning, understand your company and markets, and be prepared to make real choices under pressure and uncertainty.

So when you're tempted by another quick-fix framework, remember that there is no off-the-shelf strategy. Each one is homegrown, built on your realities and your aspirations, and tested in the choices you make every day.

