

TEN PRACTICAL GUIDELINES ON IMPLEMENTATION

In practice, strategy implementation is a fundamental part of strategy development: they are only separated in this text because of the need to break up the elements into subject and chapter topics. In addition, the limitations described in Section 13.1 and the principles outlined in Section 13.2 have real force. For example, it is difficult for people inside the organisation to cope with a wide range of options. Moreover, it is hard in such circumstances to manage the communication process involved in moving the organisation forward as described in Section 13.2. For these reasons, ten practical guidelines are offered below on strategy implementation.

- 1 *The KISS Principle: keep it simple, stupid.* This well-known phrase can be applied to implementation issues with real benefit because of the difficulties of communicating within organisations.
- 2 *Agree common terms for strategy across the organisation:* define how purpose is to be measured, what milestones are to be set, how resources are to be defined, what critical issues are likely to arise.
- 3 *Define roles, responsibilities and timing:* who will do what? And over what time period?
- 4 *Clarity and action:* try to use action verbs, so that the routes to outcomes are clear and the demands on individuals are unambiguous.
- 5 *Develop a common framework for the plan:* in large organisations in particular, comparison and choice between plans will be enhanced if all the contributing subsidiaries fill in the same basic forms – e.g. a form for purpose, a form for environmental analysis, etc.
- 6 *Regular and well-structured meetings:* strategy implementation is assisted if views are exchanged, progress reviewed and problems raised in a timely fashion. But such meetings should be structured and probably not be open-ended.
- 7 *Give someone the responsibility for managing the implementation process* – probably someone close to a very senior level in the organisation. Most managers contributing to the implementation process will have other responsibilities and cannot have an overview of the whole process – they need help.
- 8 *Link strategy implementation with other aspects of company activities:* budgets, financial project reviews, human resource appraisals and rewards along with the many other aspects that need to run concurrently with strategy implementation.
- 9 *Think carefully about how the strategy will be measured – both quantitatively and qualitatively.* Remember that the drive towards one objective can mean that other unspecified objectives can be either distorted or even ignored.
- 10 *Retain some flexibility:* one of the real dangers in the implementation process is a single focus on a rigid outcome, regardless of how either the environment or the feasibility may change.