



## Guidelines for strategic thinking

### Towards A Synthesis: A Charter for Making Strategy More Useful

(Adapted from Richard Koch, 2000. *The Financial Times Guide to Strategy: How to create and deliver a useful strategy*. Pearson Education: Edinburgh.)

A recommended series of guidelines for strategic thinking and for making strategy useful stresses the following six points:

1. Business success requires a differentiated strategy. You must be different to competitors, and able to do things that they cannot do, or cannot do as well. This requires selectivity, and also careful attention not just to the positions you have in any market, but also the skills that underpin success.
2. Operating managers are the people to 'do' strategy. (cut down on consultants!)
3. Strategy should be decentralised.
4. Strategy for one company, institution or organisation may well be incompatible with the strategy for another. Strategy should emerge from the circumstances and skills of the particular organisation.
5. You should be pragmatic about the amount of effort required in formulating strategy. Be willing to gather insight and improve decision-making, without trying to prove beyond any reasonable doubt that any particular strategy is correct. This method of 'progressive approximation' is discussed below.
6. Strategy should not be over-planned. Ideally, it should emerge as part of a repeatedly stated process of thought, hypothesis, experimentation, success, and renewed experimentation. The process should combine analysis and intuition, and should be open-ended. There should never be a 'final solution'; the strategy should always evolve, and continually deepen.