

When people decide to take a trip, they pick a destination and determine the best way to get there. Do they fly, drive, or take a train? How long will it take them to travel? If they want to arrive by a certain time, when do they need to leave? Will things like weather, currency exchange, or crowds of other tourists affect them?

Too often, though, many of those same travelers will go back to work and just hope for the best when it comes to business success. They may have a goal in mind, but no real map to get there.

Why do people do that? Here in Asia, many leaders say it is because change happens so fast that a plan seems out of date by the time they finish writing it. That misses the important point about strategic planning: **the value is often not in the plan itself, but in the planning process.**

It is not enough to just dream about what could be; a good planning effort forces you to be realistic, but also helps you redefine "realistic." The simple act of putting things down on paper leads you to really think, to debate ideas, to divide up your resources and match them to your goals. In short, it gets you away from talking about all those things you should be doing and moves you in the direction of actually doing them. Whether you are leading a company, or you are a manager leading a team within a bigger organization, you need to be clear about where you want to go and what it will take to get there. This session introduces participants to a 5-step planning model similar to that used by military strategists, so that they can:

### **ESTABLISH AN ATTAINABLE AND MEASURABLE GOAL**

Clearly understanding where you want to go, and being able to explain that goal to others, is the critical first step. Sometimes the business goals that seem like common sense are not the ones that will actually make you most successful. You need to articulate specific, measurable business goals that help you achieve the overall mission of your organization.

### **UNDERSTAND THE CURRENT SITUATION**

A good planning process starts with questions. What is the world around me like? What resources do I have? What are my obstacles and opportunities? We will discuss how to identify key facts and assumptions that define your business context. Once you answer these questions, the impossible (or at least, the improbable) often becomes possible.

### **IDENTIFY OPTIONS**

As you ask questions, you start to see what is important and what is not; you see new possibilities open up; you consider connections and networks that were not obvious before. We will practice identifying effective options, preparing for contingencies, and identifying useful metrics.

### **CHOOSE AN OPTION AND IMPLEMENT IT**

Unless you are a freelancer working alone, implementing your plans requires effort from others. To select an option and start the process you need to communicate your plans and your timeline effectively, helping others understand not only what they should do but also why they should be doing it, so they are better able to spot problems along the way.

### **MEASURE PROGRESS AND CHANGE PLANS AS NEEDED**

The military theorist Baron von Moltke famously wrote, "No plan survives contact with the enemy." Once you begin implementing your plan, new conditions will occur – some of them outside your control, some that you can affect – and you need to have both the willingness and the ability to see the need for change and then adapt as necessary.