Develop YOUR Strategic Thinking Mindset

1. Explore and refine a vision for your own work and life — What is your life's purpose? What is the purpose of your work? Examine ways to link this personal vision with the organization's vision. Define your own personal governing values to shape how you think, decide, and act.

2. Conduct a critical self-assessment — How effective are you at strategic thinking? Do you routinely think strategically *before* you act? How often do you find yourself putting out fires vs. working proactively to *prevent* them?

3. Take time to think strategically. Go "off-line." Think critically and make yourself unavailable operationally.

4. Educate yourself; immerse yourself with new information about emerging issues and trends that may be part of your future or the future of your department and its services.

5. Challenge your current practices: *What am I doing today that I should <u>stop</u> doing? What am I doing today that I could do better? Based upon what I am learning from others (e.g., staff, customers, leaders, stakeholders, etc.), what should I <u>start</u> doing in the near future?*

6. Know when you need a break — get some distance — from the daily operational and tactical challenges in front of you. Build in time for rest and critical reflection. You can't think clearly when you are always "on!!"

7. Clarify the vision of your work area, section, or team, and then ensure that others in your work area are aligned with this vision. To the greatest extent possible, involve others in crafting a shared vision for your work area.

Develop a Strategic Thinking Mindset in Others

1. Hire the right people – those who demonstrated strategic thinking in past jobs.

2. Set the expectation that they will be strategic thinkers in every decision and action.

3. Actively engage others in contributing to a shared vision for your work area. Make the vision their vision as much as it's yours.

4. Repeatedly communicate the vision — help people see the big picture and understand how/where they fit into this picture.

5. Integrate the vision and core values into individual and team performance goals and annual performance reviews/coaching conversations.

6. Make the vision and core values part of meetings, celebrations, problem analysis and solving, etc.

7. Invite people to share/discuss what they are learning from their customers and what they see happening around them that might have a bearing on programs, services, future challenges and opportunities, etc.

8. Debrief challenges, problems, and crisis from a strategic perspective — pursue strategic insight and learning.

9. Take time to listen and acknowledge others' creative ideas, innovations, improvements, etc. Encourage and allow them to be creative — reward them; drive out fear; allow them to think "outside the box" and creatively.

10. Encourage an open dialogue around where we are today, the challenges we face, what ideas and opportunities will help us serve the public going forward, ideas to overcome challenges, etc.

11. Define the "ends" (our larger purpose) not the "means" (how we'll get there).

12. Support learning and development that helps others acquire or refine their strategic thinking skills and knowledge.

13. Empower multi-disciplinary and cross-functional groups to solve problems (bring together divergent perspectives).

14. Keep things positive — share the successes and little victories along the way.

15. Invest in building a strong sense of community within your team/organization.

16. Implement the strategic plan with flexibility and responsiveness to employee needs/contributions.

17. Give people the freedom to make decisions (autonomy) — but also provide them a context and framework within which to operate (core values).

18. Ask questions of others vs. providing answers. Encourage others' critical reflection.

19. Walk the talk — live your values.

20. Help people know when to take a break — encourage them to gain some distance and perspective from the daily tactical and operational challenges.

21. Encourage everyone to challenge current practices, policies, programs, etc.

22. Cultivate and sustain a "no blame" culture.

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