

PREVENTING STRATEGIC GRIDLOCK

Leading Over, Under & Around
Organizational Jams to Achieve
High Performance Results

PAMELA HARPER

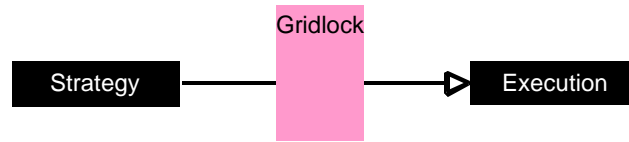
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MAIN IDEA

Despite the best intentions of an effective leader, it's not uncommon for a promising business strategy or initiative to grind to a halt as a result of organizational problems. This is the management equivalent of gridlock – where a company is unable to execute its strategy because of internal problems rather than external competitors.



So what can be done about “strategic gridlock”? First, understand how gridlock arises in despite the best intentions of managers, leaders and executives. By spotting the telltale warning signs early, you may be able to stop your organization heading towards gridlock. This is the preemptive approach to gridlock.

Secondly, if you do arrive at gridlock, understand how to break through the mist and get back to reality. This is where the U-N-L-O-C-K theory comes into its own. If you're unable to prevent strategic gridlock arising in the first place, at least develop some expertise in breaking out of the gridlock cycle. This is the reactive approach to gridlock.

“Gridlock doesn't occur only in traffic. It also happens in small, medium and large companies in virtually every industry as they strive to advance their business strategies. In fact, even the savviest executives and boards seem to be finding that as they wind their way through the turbulent 21st century business landscape, it's easy to inadvertently drive their organizations smack into a situation that I call 'strategic gridlock': the mysterious paralysis that occurs when persistent organizational problems snarl business performance.”

– Pamela Harper

1. Understand the warning signs of impending gridlock Pages 2 - 4

Strategic gridlock results whenever persistent organizational or operational problems occur which prevent a business from executing its business strategy. Once a company becomes gridlocked, it becomes paralyzed. Fortunately, however, strategic gridlock can be prevented by uncovering the seven most common mistaken assumptions about organizational realities which can combine to generate gridlock conditions.

By addressing these mistaken assumptions earlier rather than later, strategic gridlock can be avoided altogether.

The Mistaken Assumptions Which Generate Gridlock	1	One-size-fits-all thinking
	2	Management by surgery
	3	Act first, think later
	4	Expecting change to be accepted
	5	Adopting a range of new strategies
	6	Hearing only what you want to hear
	7	Staying the course despite warnings

2. Break out of strategic gridlock and move forward Pages 5 - 8

To prevent and if necessary break out of the strategic gridlock cycle, there are six major principles and guidelines involved. This is the U-N-L-O-C-K formula:

- U – Understand the full challenges involved because every organization is unique.
- N – Negotiate the buy-in of all key stakeholders as you will only accomplish what they value.
- L – Locate those within the culture who can advance one strategy initiative and block another.
- O – Organize goals and action plans so everyone is on the same page and following the same priorities.
- C – Communicate with credibility so the people within the organization will act accordingly.
- K – Keep on adjusting since the organization's reality will be changing constantly.

How To Overcome Gridlock	U	Understand the full challenge
	N	Negotiate buy-in from stakeholders
	L	Locate your “Advancers” & “Blockers”
	O	Organize your goals and plans
	C	Communicate to build credibility
	K	Keep adjusting and fine-tuning

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