



CAREER COMPASS

Steer Your Career. Accelerate Our Mission.

Leading Strategic Initiatives

Participant Workbook

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Introduction

Objectives

- On completing this course, you will be able to define a strategic initiative, describe why initiatives are so important, and apply six skills that will help you lead successful strategic initiatives.

Strategic Initiative

There are many definitions, but they boil down to the same thing: strategic initiatives are the ways that organizations put strategy into practice.

- Leaders should expect to revisit strategy multiple times throughout any given year
- Strategy, strategic initiatives, and change must be part of an ongoing review system



Why are Strategic Initiatives Important?

Strategic initiatives **turn the organization’s goals, priorities, and vision into reality.**
Strategic initiatives:

- Convert strategies into practices
- Bridge planning and execution
- Rely on leaders who can execute

Six Skills to Lead Strategic Initiatives

1. Anticipate Roadblocks
2. Challenge the Status Quo
3. Interpret and Analyze
4. Consider Your Decisions
5. Align the Team
6. Learn From Mistakes



1. Anticipate Roadblocks

- Talk to stakeholders
- Conduct research
- Consider scenarios
- Seek success examples
- Attend conferences and events
- Anticipate disruptions so that you can address them before they become major obstacles



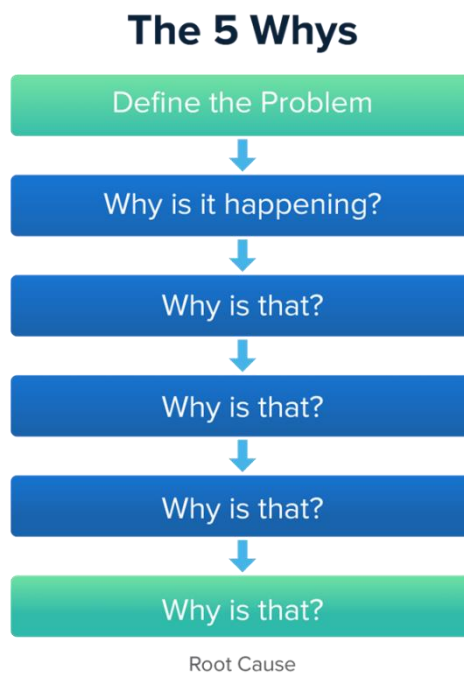
2. Challenge the Status Quo

- Question conventional wisdom and thought
- Build a diverse team
- Focus on root causes
- Prove assumptions true or false
- Create a free flow of ideas



The Five Whys

The “Five Why’s” is a simple root cause analysis technique that involves asking “Why?” until you get to the deepest root of a problem.



Consider the first two skills. Which skill is more difficult for you and why? Use the space provided here to capture your thoughts.

3. Interpret and Analyze

- List at least three possible explanations
- Invite perspectives from diverse stakeholders
- Force yourself to zoom in or out
- Look for missing information
- Supplement observation with quantitative analysis
- Step away to promote an open mind

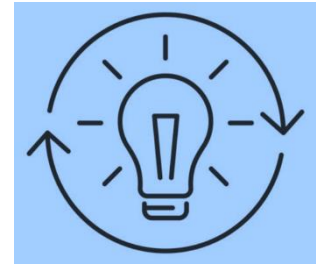
Interpretation Through Scientific Thinking

- Challenge assumptions and the “accepted wisdom”
- Change your mind if/when the facts change
- Test and experiment relentlessly
- Turn failure into data for learning
- Remain curious; seek out opposition
- Revisit and look for what you’ve missed

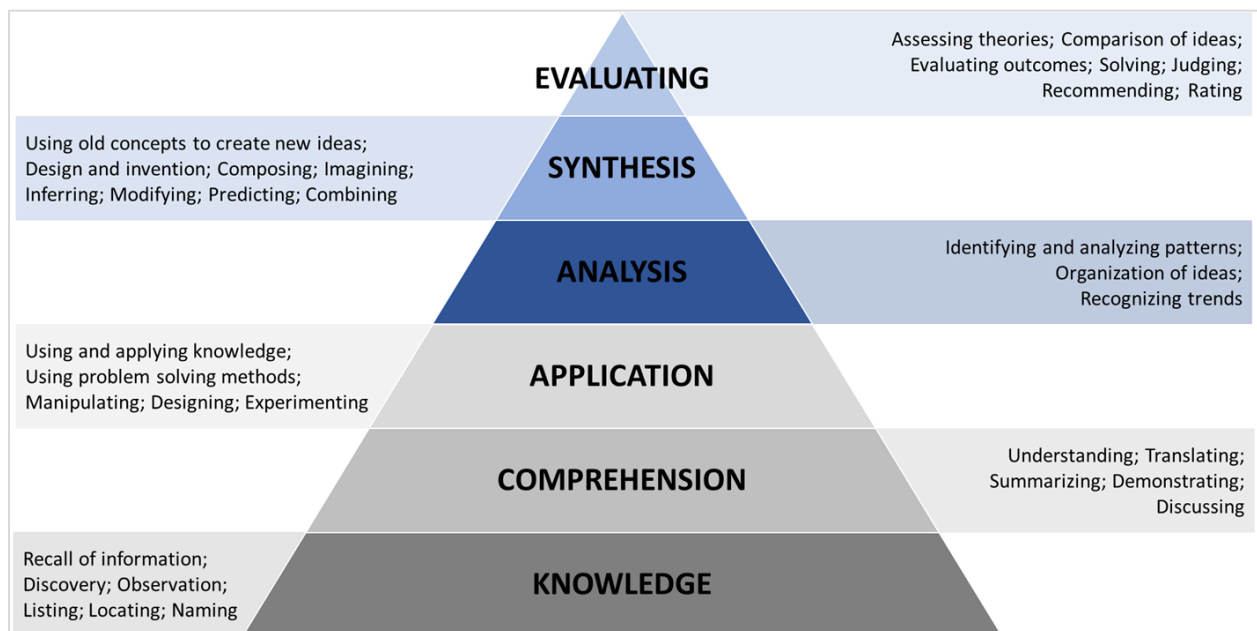
How can you begin interpreting through scientific thinking? Where would you start? Use the space provided here to capture your thoughts.

4. Consider Your Decisions

- Explore alternatives with your team
- Break big decisions into smaller components
- Emphasize the long-term over the short-term
- Pilot your decisions on a small-scale



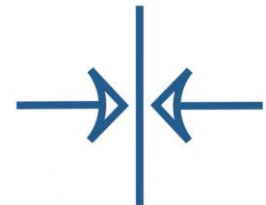
Use Bloom's Taxonomy (Revised)



Consider using the Bloom Framework to work through your decisions systematically.

5. Align the Team

- Communicate early and often
- Identify key stakeholders
- Identify any areas of misalignment
- Engage with resisters and find areas of common ground
- Quickly identify and resolve issues
- Recognize and reward colleagues



6. Learn from Mistakes

- Engage in after-action reviews
- Conduct learning audits
- Examine your successes
- Learn from struggling programs
- Create a culture where inquiry is valued
- Document and communicate your insights



Take the 6 Skills Assessment (abbreviated)

How often do you...	RARELY						ALMOST ALWAYS
ANTICIPATE SURVEY AVERAGE: 4.99*							
Gather information from a wide network of experts and sources both inside and outside your industry or function.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Predict competitors' potential moves and likely reactions to new initiatives or products.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
CHALLENGE SURVEY AVERAGE: 5.52							
Reframe a problem from several angles to understand root causes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Seek out diverse views to see multiple sides of an issue.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
INTERPRET SURVEY AVERAGE: 5.78							
Demonstrate curiosity and an open mind.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Test multiple working hypotheses with others before coming to conclusions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

DECIDE

SURVEY AVERAGE: 4.81

Balance long-term investment for growth with short-term pressure for results.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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Determine trade-offs, risks, and unintended consequences for customers and other stakeholders when making decisions.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

ALIGN

SURVEY AVERAGE: 5.01

Assess stakeholders' tolerance and motivation for change.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Pinpoint and address conflicting interests among stakeholders.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

LEARN

SURVEY AVERAGE: 4.95

Communicate stories about success and failure to promote institutional learning.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Course correct on the basis of disconfirming evidence, even after a decision has been made.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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*AVERAGES ARE BASED ON RESPONSES TO THIS SURVEY FROM MORE THAN 20,000 EXECUTIVES.

Shoemaker, Krupp & Howland, 2013

Reflect on you scores from the 6 Skills Assessment. Which area would you begin your focus and what is your first step? Use the space provided here to capture your thoughts.

Final Reflection

- What are a few things from today's session that you want to utilize when leading strategic initiatives?
- What actions can you take now to improve your ability to lead strategic initiatives?

Use the space provided to capture your response.

Contact Information

BD17 Contact Information: Write to us! We are always seeking to improve our learning and development products and encourage your feedback. Please email us with your suggestions and we will incorporate them into future work. Additionally, we are available to answer any questions about the content you may have and provide additional resources to support your learning endeavors.

- NAVFACHQTotalForceDevelopment@us.navy.mil

Development Resources

Career Compass Resource Center: An online source of information that provides NAVFAC civilian employees access to professional growth and development opportunities.

- <https://www.navfac.navy.mil/ccrc>

To access more content specific to **Initiative** competency:

- <https://www.navfac.navy.mil/Initiative>
- **Career Compass Catalog:** an online tool which provides you with information to help you take ownership of your professional development. It identifies options to assist in planning and creating a successful career path within NAVFAC.
<https://www.navfac.navy.mil/cc>

Course Credit

You will receive credit for participating in this course. Email the address below. Make sure to include all the following information:

Component	Include in Email
Address	W_NAVFAC_PRTN_NITC_NFI_ADMINS_US@navy.mil
Email Subject Line	Self-Certification – Leading Strategic Initiatives
Course Name	Leading Strategic Initiatives
Course Completion Code	9e@wvN

Or, if you have a smart phone, you can simply scan the QR code to generate the email with all the necessary information:

