

Resistance and Management Engagement in Strategic Planning: The Participation-Resistance linkage and its impact upon Strategy Implementation

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Abstract

Practitioners' participation in strategy formulation has a significant influence in strategy implementation. Formulation and implementation are interdependent processes. Although historically formulation has received more attention, any devised strategy without effective execution is useless. The whole strategic planning process from formulation to results, is useless without an effective execution, a challenging part of the process that most of the times includes change management, adaptation, resistance to change, resilience and the persistence to overcome any type of difficulties. The purpose of this paper is to study the relation between participation and resistance. Giving limited participation to practitioners in formulation is better than wide range, unrestricted participation. Limited participation with boundaries, a clear agenda and specific and well-defined goals reduces managers' (subjective) perception of uncertainty about the project. Organizational alignment and hierarchical dependence are other significant variables influencing in the process, affecting the outputs of the strategic process. Indeed, effective communication can improve the whole process and, on the contrary, a poor communication strategy affects negatively.

An interesting and useful output of this paper is the participation-resistance tool. Helpful to forecast resistance depending on the participation in formulation and considering other variables affecting the process.

Keywords: Strategic planning, strategy formulation, strategy implementation, participation, organizational alignment, hierarchical dependence, communication