

March 2026

Strategy Should Refine Work—Not Multiply It

(7 minutes to read, 7 minutes to reflect, 1 minute to take a micro action)

**Briefing
#10**

The Quiet Resistance

You've finalized the strategic plan. The themes are clear, the goals are well framed and defined, and the direction feels right. Energy is high. Alignment appears strong. Momentum feels possible.

And then—quietly, almost under the surface—comes the question:

“How are we supposed to do all of this on top of everything else?”

This is the moment many strategies stall. Not because the strategy is flawed, but because it feels **onerous**.

A good strategy should never feel onerous. It should feel **refining**.

A well-crafted strategic plan does not increase organizational workload if built well. It reorganizes attention, sharpens priorities, and clarifies What's Important Now (WIN)—for everyone involved.

The Racetrack Shift

Up until now, you've been building the vehicle—clarifying your WINs, cascading goals, building horsepower, testing traction, balancing governance, leadership, staff, and volunteer capacity.

But once the car rolls onto the racetrack, the work shifts.

It is no longer about **building**. It is about **driving**. And driving requires disciplined focus and intention.

A three-year strategy is not a burst of activity. It is a sustained race—one you intend to see through to the finish. And you cannot enter a long race carrying every legacy workstream unchanged and expect optimal performance, as every strategic cycle compels refinement.

Before the first lap begins, there must be a merger:

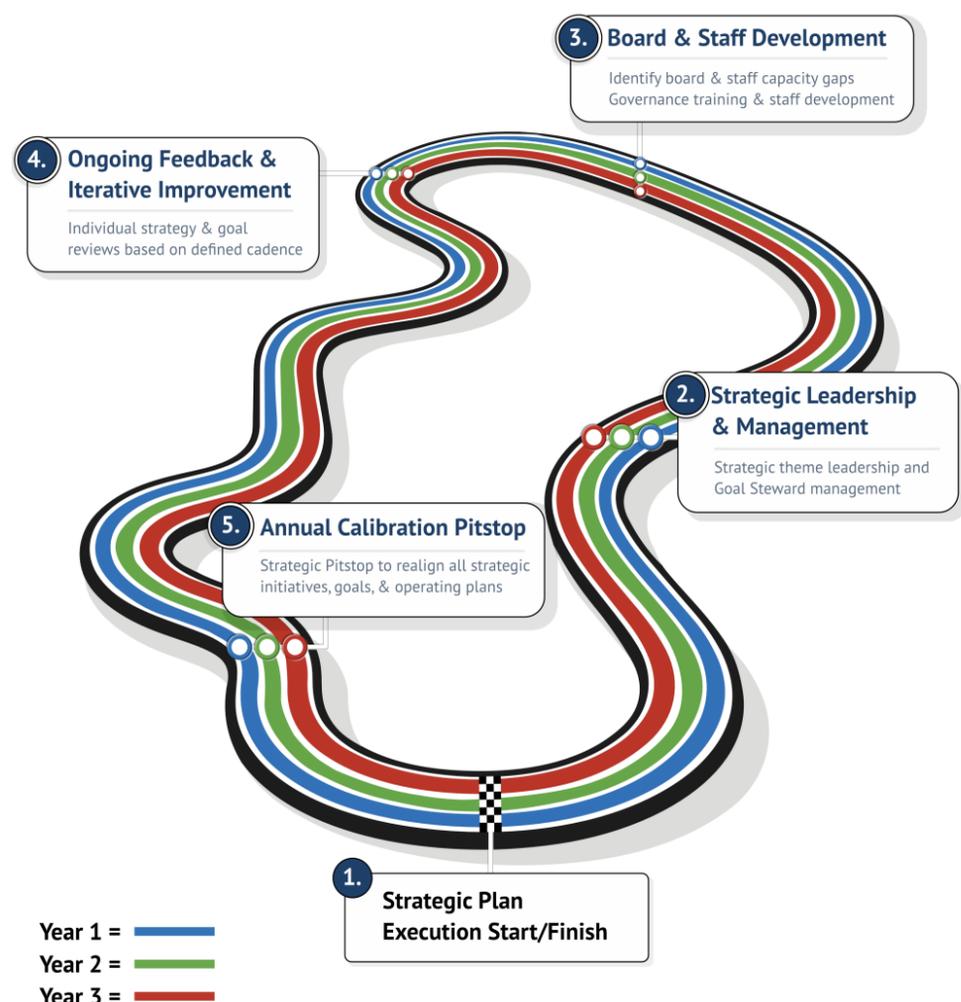
Old Work + Refined Strategy = Optimized Work

If you skip this merger, you don't gain focus—you gain overload. Attention diffuses. Energy scatters. Meetings multiply. Progress slows.

Weight matters in a race. And unexamined work is weight.

If you begin a three-year race without merging old workstreams into refined priorities, you are not starting fresh—you are compounding misalignment for the next 36 months.

Strategic Planning, Execution, & Management Cycle



The Core Reframe

A good strategic plan does not add work.

- It reorganizes attention.
- It elevates what matters now.
- It filters legacy activity.
- It retires what does not.
- It sharpens execution.

If your team feels that the new plan represents “more work”, one of two things is likely true:

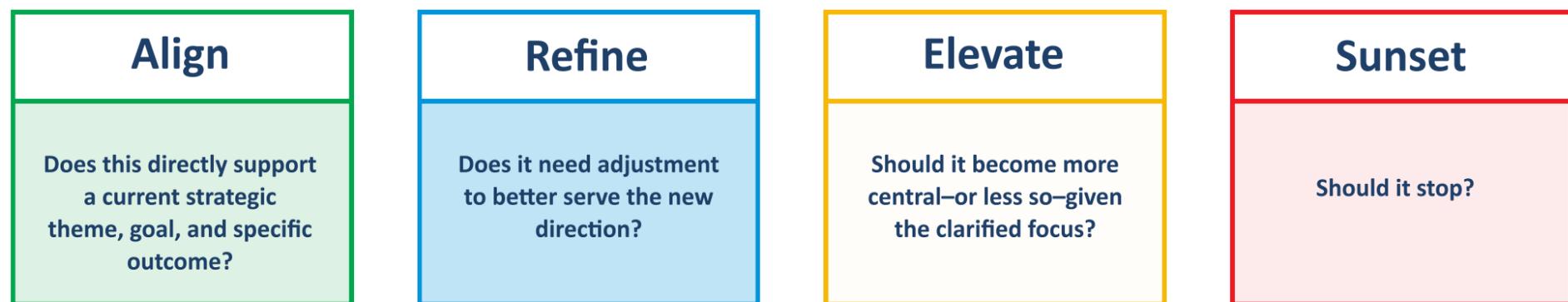
1. Legacy priorities were never explicitly revised or sunset.
2. Strategic themes and goals were never translated into daily workflows.

Strategy rarely fails at the board level first; it fails at the workflow level.

The Workstream Merger Model

Before the race begins in earnest, every department, team, and leader should run their current work through a simple filter.

For each major workstream, ask:



This is not pruning for the sake of cutting. It is merging for the sake of momentum and speed.

The goal is not to do less for its own sake. The goal is to carry forward only what serves the race you are now running.

From Organizational Focus to Individual Flow

This is where a psychological shift occurs.

When staff cannot see how their daily work connects to the strategic themes, goals, and outcomes, work feels fragmented and disconnected.

Energy diffuses. Motivation declines. Slack creeps into the system.

But when an individual can say:

“This task drives a strategy. That strategy moves a metric. That metric fulfills Goal 2 under Theme 1.”

Ambiguity drops. Energy consolidates. Execution sharpens. Progress becomes measurable.

And that is where flow begins to emerge—not just at the individual level, but across teams and throughout the organization.

You are not asking people to do more. You are asking them to do the right things, more intentionally.

Executive Reflection: Before the First Lap

Before your organization truly begins its race, ask:

- Have we explicitly mapped our current workstreams to the new strategic themes and goals?
- Has every department reviewed and rewritten its operating plans for each goal under the new strategic plan?
- Have we clearly communicated what stays, what's changing, and what stops?
- Can each staff member articulate which strategic goal(s), outcomes, and metrics their work supports?
- Have we given people permission to let go of legacy activities?

If the answer to most of these is no, the merger has not yet occurred—and your race has not yet truly begun.

Closing Thought: Entering the Track

You do not win a three-year race, just by building a beautiful vehicle.

You win by:

- Reducing drag.
- Aligning effort.
- Merging old habits with new priorities.
- Driving with disciplined focus.
- Refining your motion lap after lap.

Before the first lap, lighten the load, merge the work, and clarify the focus.

Then—and only then—accelerate.

Strategy should not multiply effort. It should multiply value and impact each year towards its finish line.

This brief builds on principles from my book, *The 3 Secrets of Attentional Leadership*, where I describe how Strategic Focus fuels Performance Focus. If you'd like a copy, just let me know. And if you ever need a fresh set of eyes on how your strategy is translating into daily work, I'm happy to help.

Sincerely,



Bruce H. Jackson, MBA/MPA, Ph.D
Principal
Attentional Leadership Institute



1-Minute Micro Action:

The Strategic Merge

This week, ask every department leader to send you:

1. Their top three current workstreams.
2. The strategic theme and goal each supports.
3. One activity they recommend refining or stopping.

You will quickly see whether the strategic plan has integrated into daily work—or is merely sitting on top of it.

That one request can surface misalignment, clarify focus, and significantly increase commitment.

