



mhca's e-Newsletter

Published March 2025

## **Strategic Thinking: The Foundation for Planning Success**

*A Guest Article from Leadership Expert John Spence*

In business, strategic thinking and strategic planning are often mistaken for the same thing. They're not. Strategic thinking comes first—it's the blueprint for everything that follows. The computer term GI = GO (garbage in, garbage out) applies perfectly here. Faulty thinking leads to flawed plans.

### **The Case for Strategic Thinking**

Strategic thinking goes beyond making lists or setting goals—it requires analyzing deeply, solving problems creatively, and uncovering new opportunities. This is where leaders ask the big questions: *What makes us unique? What challenges do we face? How do we win in the marketplace?*

When done well, strategic thinking clarifies direction and aligns the team. It ensures you're solving the right problems before you begin execution. A well-defined strategy turns ideas into competitive advantage. Without it, planning becomes guesswork.

### **The Cost of Skipping Strategic Thinking**

Many leaders skip straight to planning. They're eager to execute and show results. But action without insight wastes resources. Leaders often end up solving the wrong problems—or addressing the right problems in the wrong way. Strategic thinking is the pause before the leap, ensuring you're headed in the right direction.

## How Leaders Can Think Strategically

Strategic thinking requires discipline. It's not something you can squeeze into the gaps of your day. Leaders must deliberately create space for thoughtful analysis. Here's how:

### 1. Prioritize Reflection Time

Block regular time for strategic thinking. Even 15 minutes a day can yield fresh insights. Use this time to assess assumptions, identify patterns, and anticipate challenges.

### 2. Ask Transformative Questions

Surface-level questions lead to surface-level answers. Instead, ask probing questions: *What are our blind spots? What do our customers truly value? What does success look like in five years?* These questions uncover hidden opportunities.

### 3. Engage in Scenario Planning

Imagine multiple futures. Consider how your organization would respond to different scenarios. This exercise sharpens your ability to adapt to change and make informed decisions under uncertainty.

### 4. Leverage Diverse Perspectives

Strategic thinking benefits from input. Engage your team and listen to alternative viewpoints. Collaboration often reveals solutions that would be overlooked in isolation.

### 5. Learn from the Past

Regularly review past decisions. What worked? What didn't? Reflecting on successes and failures ensures your future thinking is grounded in real-world lessons.

## From Thinking to Planning

Once your strategy is clear, it's time to plan. Strategic planning is where you move from ideas to action—creating goals, assigning resources, and setting timelines. But it's essential to recognize that planning can't fix flawed thinking.

## The Leader's Role

Leaders set the tone. A thoughtful leader models intentionality and focus, creating a culture where strategic thinking is valued. Strategic thinking focuses on curiosity, meaningful questions, and rewarding thoughtful ideas—not simply adding meetings or forming task forces.

## Why This Matters

Strategic thinking transforms organizations. It builds clarity and resilience, ensuring that every plan starts with purpose. Without it, even the best efforts can lead to failure. Leaders who invest time in thinking before doing create a competitive edge that's hard to replicate.

So, pause before you plan. Reflect deeply. Ask better questions. When you invest in strategic thinking, you lay the foundation for planning—and success.

*Did you enjoy the article? They you may want to check out several of John's sessions for **mhca**, which have been recorded and are available to **mhca** members online at: <https://mhca.com/conference-presentations>.*

**The Power to  
Build Meaningful  
Connections**  
With an Integrated  
**Closed Loop™  
Experience**

Would you like to  
reschedule your  
appointment?

Better for  
Your Patients.  
**Better for  
Your Practice.**

[Learn More](#)

**nextgen.**  
healthcare

Unsubscribe from Monthly Minute Newsletter

P.O. Box 12037

Tallahassee, FL 32317

mhca  
P.O. Box 12037  
Tallahassee, FL 32317

TEL: (850) 942-4900

*If you don't want to get similar messages from us in the future, you can **Unsubscribe or Opt-Out** by clicking the following link:*

<https://mhca.com/index.php?>

[option=com\\_civicrm&task=civicrm/mailling/unsubscribe&Itemid=2770&reset=1&jid=&qid=&h=fakehash](https://mhca.com/index.php?option=com_civicrm&task=civicrm/mailling/unsubscribe&Itemid=2770&reset=1&jid=&qid=&h=fakehash)