



**Converting simplicity as a military strategy principle to a successful tool for strategy
execution in a geographically dispersed organisation**

George de Wet Barrie

29589292

A research project submitted to the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration.

10 November 2010

Abstract

This research reports a case study conducted to determine whether the application of *Simplicity as a military principle can assist a geographically dispersed organisation* in executing strategy more effectively.

An investigation was conducted into the main reasons why strategy execution is not fully effective in an identified geographical dispersed organisation. A survey and semi-structured interviews were conducted to identify these inhibitors. A comparison with existing literature identified the 4 main requirements to effective strategy execution in this organisation.

A review of the application of Simplicity in the military context was completed. A comprehensive literature review, integrated with semi-structured interviews with general staff in the South African Army identified military approaches to Simplicity and its impact on execution successes.

A conceptual content analysis matched successful military approaches to Simplicity with the main drivers of ineffective strategy execution in the organisation. The output was strategy execution inhibitors in the organisation, with matched approaches to Simplicity from interviews with military professionals.


The compilation of a specific model and tools for simplification was proposed for the organisation. The output was a model for strategy execution at all levels, with tools and techniques discussed to ensure the simplification of strategic objectives in execution.

Keywords

Strategy execution, simplification, short term goals, military approach to strategy execution

Declaration

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.



Signature

10 November 2010

Date

Acknowledgements

I wish to record my sincere thanks and appreciation to:

My wife Isabel, who was my pillar of strength through this journey. Without your love, understanding and support I would never have completed this programme. You are undoubtedly a strong and independent woman, capable of overcoming any turmoil and challenge with the focus and calmness required to motivate others. I am indebted to you forever.

My research supervisor, Gavin Price. Your support and open-minded approach to this topic, which we share a great passion for, and your guidance and enthusiasm were strong motivators for me to invest a great deal of time into this project, thus ensuring a product that I believe is of a high quality.

My colleagues and superiors at work. Your understanding and appreciation for the difficulty of this programme clearly indicates your commitment to, and belief in my future with the organisation.

The SANDF Generals who assisted me with openness and enthusiasm. Your demonstration of knowledge and experience in execution of strategies and operational plans greatly assisted me in delivering this project.

And to my family. Without your support and motivation, this would have been a bridge too far to cross.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Keywords	ii
Declaration	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
List of Figures	vii
List of Tables	viii
1 CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM.....	1
1.1 Research Title	1
1.2 Research Problem	1
1.3 Research Objective	2
1.4 Research Aim	3
2 CHAPTER 2 –LITERATURE REVIEW	4
2.1 Introduction.....	4
2.2 Military Strategy Review	6
2.3 Principles of War and Strategy Execution	8
2.4 Simplicity and Strategy Execution.....	10
2.5 Strategy Execution in Organisations	13
2.6 Strategy Execution in a Geographically Dispersed Organisation	23
3 CHAPTER 3 - RESEARCH QUESTION	27
4 CHAPTER 4 – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	27
4.1 Introduction.....	27
4.2 Research Approach	28
4.3 Research Limitations.....	33
5 CHAPTER 5 – RESULTS.....	34

5.1	Introduction.....	34
5.2	Host Company Description.....	36
5.3	Host Company Survey	38
5.4	Host Company Interviews	50
5.5	Military Personnel Interviews.....	58
6	CHAPTER 6 - DISCUSSION OF RESULTS	70
6.1	Introduction.....	70
6.2	Strategic Level Functioning in Strategy Execution.....	73
6.3	Operational Level Functioning in Strategy Execution.....	75
6.4	Tactical Level Functioning in Strategy Execution.....	78
6.5	Technical Level Functioning in Strategy Execution.....	79
6.6	Comparison of Host Company Strategy Inhibitors to Military Approaches to Simplicity	80
7	CHAPTER 7 - CONCLUSION	85
7.1	Introduction.....	85
7.2	Summary.....	85
7.3	Recommendations	88
7.4	Recommended Future Studies	90
	REFERENCES.....	91
	APPENDICES.....	94
	Appendix A – Example of Survey Questionnaire	94
	Appendix B – Guiding Questions for Open-Ended Interviews: Host Company.....	99
	Appendix C – Guiding Questions for Open-Ended Interviews: SANDF Generals	100

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

List of Figures

Figure 5-1 Operational Organisation Structure	37
Figure 5-2 Questionnaire Respondents Distribution	40
Figure 5-3 SA Army Levels of Military Strategy	59
Figure 5-4 Strategic Levels and SA Army Organisation	60
Figure 6-1 Comparison between military and geographical dispersed organisations	72

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

List of Tables

Table 5-1 Main requirements and Literature comparison.....	41
Table 5-2 Successful Execution Requirement 1 and responses	43
Table 5-3 Successful Execution Requirement 2 and responses.....	44
Table 5-4 Successful Execution Requirement 3 and responses.....	47
Table 5-5 Successful Execution Requirement 4 and responses.....	49
Table 6-1 Successful Execution Requirement 1, organisation inhibitors and military applications.....	81
Table 6-2 Successful Execution Requirement 2, organisation inhibitors and military applications.....	82
Table 6-3 Successful Execution Requirement 3, organisation inhibitors and military applications.....	83
Table 6-4 Successful Execution Requirement 4, organisation inhibitors and military applications.....	84

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

1 CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 Research Title

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation.

1.2 Research Problem

To achieve strategic goals, a company requires a sound strategy and effective operations to execute the strategy (Kaplan & Norton, 2008). Both are critical for success and they must be interconnected.

Just as a military force is deployed for battle in the field, a geographically dispersed organisation has capabilities and resources that it must apply at the right time and place to ensure that the desired effect is obtained. This means that the efforts and skills of all the geographical hubs must be concentrated and focussed on achieving the strategic objectives from Head Office.

A recent study found that only 10% of large companies achieve their growth targets (Moore, 2008). This indicates that the strategies employed by most companies end up in failure in terms of the achievement of the objectives of these strategies. The main reasons for this non-achievement of strategic goals are (Moore, 2008):

- Strategic objectives are not realistic;
- The strategy does not define the values of customers or employees;

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

- The focus of the company is not on obtaining the objectives of the strategy;
- The objectives of the strategy are not clear to the executors;
- The strategy is not understood and thus not executed at all levels of the company.

Jensen (1997) suggested that strategies fail in execution due to the complexities inherent in them as well as the inability of management to communicate clear goals and objectives. The main reasons for failure can be summarised as:

- Clear shared goals were not derived and rolled out through the whole company;
- A common focus towards these goals and objectives did not exist;
- Actions in execution were not synchronised to serve the customer needs and to meet the company's strategy, mission or vision;
- Clear common objectives and tools to achieve these objectives were not available to all involved in strategy execution.

1.3 Research Objective

The fundamental question this research aims to answer is:

“Can the application of Simplicity as a principle of war, and its employment in a military context, be applied to a geographically dispersed organisation to improve strategy execution in the organisation?”

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

The main objectives of this research are to:

- Objective 1: Determine the underlying causes of ineffectiveness in strategy execution in a geographically dispersed organisation.
- Objective 2: Determine how Simplicity improves strategy execution in military organisations on the operational level.
- Objective 3: Determine how the simplification of strategic objectives by means of the definition and tracking of short term goals can improve strategy execution in a geographically dispersed organisation.
- Objective 4: Determine and define specific military approaches to strategy execution that can improve strategy execution in a geographically dispersed organisation.

1.4 Research Aim

The aim of this research is to define a theoretical approach to assist geographically dispersed organisations in improving strategy execution by reviewing and applying a principle of war, namely Simplicity, to strategy execution on the operational and tactical level.

2 CHAPTER 2 –LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Strategy is derived from the Greek word “Strategos”, literally meaning “General” (Horwath, 2006). The early Greeks also used terms such as “strategike episteme” (General’s knowledge) and “strategon sophia” (General’s wisdom) to describe the association between the application of soldiers and the art of waging war (Horwath, 2006).

Carl von Clausewitz, considered a master of strategic study, defined strategy as “the employment of battles to gain the end of war” (Maude & Graham, 1997). This definition is limited to a military approach following von Clausewitz’s experiences in the 19th century.

In business terms, Pearce & Robinson (2005) define strategy as a process where the flow of information through organized stages of analysis assists and ensures that a company achieves its predefined aims. This process, flowing through the planning and implementation phases, also ensures that the company reaches its long term mission, as well as short term objectives (Pearce & Robinson, 2005).

David (1997) defines strategic management as the art and science of formulation, execution and evaluation of cross-functional decisions enabling an organisation to achieve its set objectives. It requires the focus of integration of internal functions and capabilities to achieve organisational success. David (1997) also states that strategies are the means that enables an organisation to achieve its long term goals. Raps (2004) states that a strategy

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

must not only define an organisation's direction, but is also the simplified definition of top management's long term responsibilities.

Strategic Management consists of 3 distinguishable phases, namely strategic planning, execution and control (Pearce & Robinson, 2005). The most challenging task for management is to implement a strategy in accordance with the strategic plan. For this, strategy must be understood by everyone involved in and responsible for strategy execution (Kaplan & Norton, 2001). However, these phases are not independent of one another (Jones & Hill, 2009); they are interlinked and interdependent. The third phase, namely control, ensures that progress measurement occurs to determine the alignment of the execution phase with the planning phase. Any deviations will warrant re-alignment, re-planning and required change management (Jones & Hill, 2009).

Apart from reaching organisational goals, well defined and implemented strategies will ensure an organisation's welfare by (Pearce & Robinson, 2005):

- Enhancing an organisation's ability to identify and manage organisational challenges and problems;
- Enhancing the optimal application of resources in an organisation towards a common defined goal;
- Enhancing an organisation's focus on the best alternatives for organisational success;
- Reducing the probability and effects of resistance to change, as internal stakeholders understand and commit to the delivery of strategic objectives.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

Li, Guohui & Eppler (2008) reviewed various definitions and perspectives on the meaning of strategy execution and define it as a dynamic, iterative and complex process, consisting of a set of decisions and activities by managers and employees. This process is affected by numerous internal and external factors and aims to turn strategic plans into reality in order to achieve strategic objectives.

2.2 Military Strategy Review

The execution of a business strategy, just as the execution of a military strategy, must be able to evolve to respond to the changing environment in which it is executed. According to Clemons & Santamaria (2002) warfare takes place on three levels, namely:

- The physical level, driven by firepower, weapons technology, personnel strength and training and logistics.
- The psychological level, dependant on morale, leadership and courage.
- The analytical level, challenging commanders to consider the situational climate on the battlefield, make effective decisions according to the situation and to define and execute tactical plans to realise the required outcomes of those decisions.

It is the responsibility of military commanders (senior managers) to ensure that resources available to them do not only survive, but prevail in operational theatres (Clemons & Santamaria, 2002).

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

Clemons & Santamaria (2002) also point out required attitudes required for successful campaign (strategy) execution. The most notable and applicable are:

- Focus. This implies the allocation of resources to certain critical points to be able to exploit key market opportunities.
- Decentralised decision making. Empower personnel closest to the decision point and with the most relevant and applicable information to make decisions as a situation unfolds.
- Rapid tempo. Allow managers to identify opportunities, take decisions and implement plans quickly, thus allowing for the seizure of initiative.
- Combined arms. Combine resources and capabilities to generate collective returns, greater than those generated by individual initiatives.

A successful military commander must establish and maintain a balance between what he requires (the Aim or End state), the methods available to him (Ways) and the resources available to achieve his objective (Means) (Maude & Graham, 1997).

The levels of business strategy can be compared to the Military Strategy, Operational and Tactical levels in military strategy and can be defined as follows (Tom & Barrons, 2006):

- Military strategy determines the overall availability of resources to achieve a desired and realistically achievable aim or outcome. This aim must be aligned with the resources available to execute the strategy.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

- Operational strategy entails the leadership and guidance from commanders in the actual theatre of operations. Operational strategy is the required link between strategic objectives and the actions required to achieve these objectives. Commanders on the operational level are required to define and lead a plan or plans that will result in the achievement of one or more objectives of the military strategy. Operational strategy is concerned with planning a continuous sequence of battles and other contributing activities and not only with engaging with the enemy in individual battles.
- The tactical level is the spear end of any force and the business end of the fighting. Coordination of effort and power at this level will ensure victory as quickly as possible at the lowest cost. Commanders at this level apply knowledge and skills effectively and decisively in alignment with objectives received from the operational level. Successful tactical execution ensures the attainment of operational objectives, thus delivering on strategic aims and objectives.

2.3 Principles of War and Strategy Execution

War at the strategic level is considered an intellectual process, with the development and execution of strategy both being creative activities (Johnsen, Johnson, Kievit, Lovelace & Metz, 1995). A framework is required to assist military leaders in the definition, planning and execution of strategy. The 9 Principles of War are the foundations on which all military operations are planned and executed (US Army Field Manual).

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

Taking this into account it is clear that investigating the link between military and business strategy is not a new topic (Tom & Barrons, 2006).

The following principles of war are considered applicable to strategy execution (Abbott, Keeven, Fisher & Fortuna, 2008, US Army Field Manual, Johnsen et al, 1995):

- Objective (Selection and Maintenance of the Aim). This principle is considered as the main principle of war and ensures that a single and clear aim is the key to successful execution of operations.
- Initiative (Offensive Actions). A practical approach to gain advantage, sustain momentum and seize the initiative. This implies the capture, keep and exploitation of the initiative against an opposing force.
- Unity of Effort (Unity of Command). Coordination of all activities being executed to ensure the attainment of the higher objective.
- Focus. The alignment of resources and time taken to achieve a desired outcome or for the achievement of an objective.
- Economy of Effort (Economy of Force). The focus of effort on priority objectives, and the allocation of fewer resources to lower priorities.
- Concentration of Force. To achieve intended outcomes by means of decisive, synchronised actions, when and where required.
- Flexibility. The ability to change easily and quickly to meet new requirements and to re-align effort to a new opportunity.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

- Sustainability. To ensure the means are available to continue efforts in the attainment of tactical objectives and strategic goals.
- Simplicity. Simplicity ensures that strategies and plans are clearly defined, concise and easily understandable. This ensures motivation, focus and a unified effort to ensure successful strategy execution (Etling, 1985). Simplicity implies the planning and execution of a strategy that would not exceed the capabilities of the organisation responsible to execute the strategy (Johnsen et al, 1995).

2.4 Simplicity and Strategy Execution

2.4.1 Introduction

Hrebiniak & Joyce (1986) identify the translation of long term strategic aims into specific short term objectives as a critical requirement of the process of successful strategy execution. Short term objectives can reduce uncertainty and complexity, as limitations to successful strategy execution (Hrebiniak & Joyce, 1986).

De Bono (1998) suggests that an organisation with smaller operational units can be controlled more effectively by management than an organisation comprising of large units. However, the smaller units must be organised in such a manner that they are capable of serving the larger purpose (mission) of the organisation. An effective means of ensuring the successful functioning of an organisation is to break down an organisation's strategy into smaller parts (objectives) that are all aligned with the higher level goals of the organisation (de Bono, 1998).

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

2.4.2 Simplicity and Strategy Execution in the Military

Jones (1996) describes Simplicity as a very important military principle, with experience in the military domain indicating that complex plans often fail due to the inherent difficulties caused by the complexity thereof. This inhibits effective coordination between forces (resources) and ultimately affects the successful execution of strategic plans.

Simplicity implies that a plan is understood by everyone and the actions required to execute it is understandable to all involved. This translates into breaking down strategic objectives into executable and focussed tactical goals, implying that commanders on the tactical level have clearly defined shorter term objectives that they must attain to achieve the higher level strategic objectives (Kaplan & Norton, 2001).

Tom & Barrons (2006) describe three components critical to be clear and defined in the execution of military operations. These are:

- Ends: This defines the purpose and objectives of an organisation. Thus, the strategic objectives.
- Ways: These are the methods and options available to managers to achieve organisational goals.
- Means: All resources available to an organisation to execute a strategy and sustain future existence.

In military terms, Simplicity leads to a better understanding of a commander's intent (Strategic Objectives) and will ensure leaders at all levels understand and are capable to

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

accomplish the mission (US Army Field Manual). Simplicity in strategy execution is also effective in environments where the personnel responsible for execution are tired or stressed (US Army Field Manual).

The application of concepts enables Simplicity in military execution (de Bono, 1998). Concepts assist a military commander in defining the general direction and purpose for the envisaged operation. The purpose of a concept must be general, vague and blurry. This allows sub-ordinates to apply their own initiative to attain the desired outcome.

2.4.3 Simplicity and Strategy Execution in the Organisation

Hrebiniak & Joyce (1986) stipulate that organisations must take deliberate actions to reduce the complexity and scope of their strategic plans to manageable and focussed portions, with responsible personnel allocated and accountable for the execution of these smaller objectives. Simplicity addresses the required relationship between managers, employees and other functions within the organisation. It implies that management have identified and understand the capabilities and limitations of the organisation and executed strategic planning with these in mind (Johnsen et al, 1995). Simplicity in strategy execution will minimize the possibility of misunderstandings and can limit confusion at lower levels in an organisation (Seitz, Oakeley and Garcia-Huidobro, 2002).

Johnsen et al (1995) also states that strategic leaders (senior management) must clearly express their strategic intent (vision) to subordinates (managers and employees). De Bono (1998) states that leaders must understand for whom simplification of strategic objectives is

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

designed (Who will affect the execution and to what level must the desired objectives be simplified) and who will benefit from the application of it.

Simplicity however, does not imply that plans for execution should be short or include fewer components. The strategic plan must be communicated in such a manner that the intended executors must totally understand the desired deliverables of the strategy, whether the short term objective, or the overall desired outcome (Johnsen et al, 1995). Johnsen et al (1995) also stipulates that the greater the complexity and diversity of the strategic plan, the more the requirement exists to simplify the outcome and the more challenging it is to simplify desired outcomes.

In future, the importance of clarity (Simplicity) will become a greater requirement for effective strategy execution, as the time and abilities to rectify misunderstandings and misinterpretations will decrease. This implies that strategic objectives must be clear and understandable for the start of execution (Johnsen et al, 1995). De Bono (1998) also reiterates the importance of clarity in an organisation, as this will ensure the alignment of activities with the values of that organisation.

2.5 Strategy Execution in Organisations

David (1997) considers strategy execution as the mobilisation of managers and employees to transform formulated strategic plans into action.

Traditionally the strategic decision making hierarchy of any company contains three levels, namely corporate, business level and functional (or operational) level (Pearce & Robinson,

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

2005). Corporate strategy is concerned with the organisation as a whole on high level areas, including, but not limited to portfolio management, diversification and resource allocations across the whole business and subordinate operating units (Pearce & Robinson, 2005). At business strategy level the focus is on the delivery of products and/or services and on how to compete in a given industry or market segment (Hrebiniak, 2008). Business strategy guides operations and ensures that the functional level of an organisation is aligned with the corporate strategy (Hrebiniak, 2008).

Hrebiniak (2004) states that successful strategy execution is critical to organisational success. Execution is a focussed and logical set of associated activities that enables an organisation to commit to a strategic plan and to execute it effectively (Hrebiniak, 2004).

Raps (2004) identifies top management's commitment to strategy execution as a non-negotiable prerequisite to ensure successful strategy execution. Top management must never assume that lower level managers have the same degree of understanding of strategic objectives as they do. It is imperative that they influence employees towards the urgency and validity of strategic objectives (Raps, 2004).

Hrebiniak (2004) identifies the following obstacles to strategy execution at organisational level:

- Time frames for execution of strategies are planned too long in duration;
- Uncertainty of responsibilities where too many resources are involved in strategy execution;

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

- Poor or vague strategic plans, causing uncertainty and confusion;
- Strategy execution plans that are directly in conflict with the organisational power structure;
- A general lack of understanding and commitment to the strategic plan, due to organisational structure limitations;
- Unclear responsibilities and accountability in the execution phase of the organisational strategy;
- The inability of management to effectively manage change in the organisation.

Kipp (1999) found that managers were confronted with specific challenges in strategy execution; those being:

- Remaining competitive in relation to a continuous changing business environment. This is considered an intellectual challenge.
- Sustaining a healthy relationship between managers and employees who view strategic objectives differently, being a social challenge.
- Aligning the company's operational activities and processes with strategic objectives and intentions, which is viewed as an organisational challenge.
- Maintaining focus on the strategic objectives, while still functioning in a socially acceptable and responsible manner, being an ethical challenge.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

The following organisational actions are identified by Pearce & Robinson (2005) as critical to successful execution of strategy:

- An organisation must develop simplistic and understandable short term objectives, with executable action plans;
- An organisation must develop specific functional tactics, to ensure continued competitive advantage in the market / industry in which it operates;
- An organisation must empower employees to make applicable operational decisions;
- An effective reward system must be in place for the attainment of objectives.

Hrebiniak & Joyce (1986) state that logical consistency must be applied to strategy execution to ensure:

- The successful translation of required long term objectives into specific and understandable indicators of short term required performance for employees
- These short term measures of performance are aligned and compliment to the long term growth and health of the organisation.

Kaplan and Norton (2001) identified 5 principles that define a Strategy-focussed Organisation, being an organisation capable of:

- Mobilising change through executive leadership. A very important condition for successful strategy execution is ownership and the involvement of senior

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

management. A sense of urgency for the required change must be established and promoted by senior management.

- Translating strategy into operational terms. The strategy of an organisation must be described and laid out in such a manner that it can be understood and executed by all involved.
- Aligning the organisation with the strategy. Organisations consist of different departments and functional business units, each with different capabilities. If synergy in terms of strategic focus is to be achieved, these departments should be coordinated and aligned with the organisation strategy. Functional silos are considered a major barrier to successful strategy execution and these barriers need to be broken down.
- Making strategy everyone's responsibility. For successful strategy execution all employees must understand the strategy. Continuous and clear communication of the strategy, its objectives and status in execution will ensure organisational alignment.
- Making strategy formulation a continuous process. Another requirement for successful strategy execution is to integrate tactics, as part of the operational plan, with the management of the strategic objectives. With this, an organisation must review the strategy, the attainment of its objectives and the status of execution more regularly. This allows management to monitor organisational performance against short term targets.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

Neilson, Martin & Powers (2008) identified the following levers as the most important for successful strategy execution in a company:

- Ensure that all employees know their specific responsibilities aligned with strategic objectives.
- Higher level management delegate operational decisions to lower management. This allows higher management to focus on the development of strategies to achieve the organisation's mission.
- Ensure that information pertaining to the environment of operations flows quickly and accurately to Head Office.
- Ensure that information is transmitted across divisions within the company.
- Sensitise employees on the influence of their decisions on company profitability and performance.

Evans and Richardson (2008) also identified the following requirements for the successful execution of strategic plans:

- The correct and focussed allocations of resources. Resources must be allocated to fit strategic priorities.
- The establishment of an effective and efficient organisational structure. The structure of an organisation must not only support the strategy. The structure must be capable and efficient in driving the strategy to success.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

- The development of an appropriate culture. The culture of an organisation must contribute positively to the achievement of strategic objectives. If there is not alignment between the culture and the strategy of an organisation, the execution of the strategy will be a failure, as employees will not associate themselves with the strategy.
- The management of change during strategy execution. For strategic execution to be successful, the organisation must be able to overcome any internal resistance to change. To decrease the presence of resistance to change, organisations must be aware that the involvement and participation of employees in strategy execution and change management are critical.

Paterson (2010) confirms that effective communication in strategy execution give employees a clear understanding of:

- What is expected from them (goals);
- How their outputs will be measured, compared to required goals;
- How they will be held accountable for their required deliverables, compared to the goals set for them in the execution of the strategy.

Alignment between the organisation and its strategy means that strategic planning and execution cannot be limited as the responsibility of only top management but needs to be the responsibility of all personnel (Kaplan & Norton, 2001).

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

Khadem (2008) reiterates the alignment of personnel to the strategy of an organisation, by stating that total alignment within the organisation ensures a system for effective strategy execution.

For successful execution of a strategy, management must understand the 3 core processes that impact on the strategic plan, namely (Frigo, 2003):

- The organisation and its inherent capabilities.
- The resources within the organisation that will execute the strategic plan.
- The environment in which the business operates.

Connecting strategy to operations requires a company to (Donovan, 2009):

- Define an operational strategy;
- Translate the operational strategy into tactical objectives;
- Translate tactical objectives into tactical action plans.

Kaplan & Norton (2008) state that strategy and operations must be interconnected to ensure an organisation can attain its goals. For this to be realised, a six stage management process is proposed, namely (Kaplan & Norton, 2008):

- Develop a strategy;
- Plan the strategy execution;
- Align firm resources with the strategic objectives;
- Plan operations;

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

- Monitor and learn from operational execution;
- Review and adapt the strategy to optimise outcomes and delivery.

Short term objectives must also align with individual and organisational goals (Hrebiniak & Joyce, 1986).

Gay & D'Aprix (2007) suggest that companies must ensure there is "Line of Sight" between employees and the organisation's strategic objectives. Simply informing employees about the organisation's strategy may lead to:

- Employees misunderstanding the strategy;
- Employees not understanding their roles and responsibilities on delivery of strategic objectives;
- Employees not taking ownership of the strategy or operational execution plans;

"Line of Sight" can be defined as empowering employees to understand and buy into the business strategy. Employees are committed to contribute to the achievement of strategy objectives and they are aware of what is required from them to achieve these strategic objectives (Gay & D'Aprix, 2007).

Gay & D'Aprix (2007) also suggest the following approach to establish "Line of Sight" between employees and strategy objectives, namely:

- Develop and validate the core message of the strategy. Senior managers must have a consistent understanding of the organisation strategy, to ensure it is communicated

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

in such a manner that confusion is not created at subordinate levels. Employees must be involved in the validation of the strategic objectives, compared to the current state. To validate current strategic objectives, senior management need to determine:

- The current “Line of Sight” of employees to the organisation strategy.
- Current barriers (internal and external) that can influence the future attainment of strategic objectives.
- Current processes (internal) that may inhibit the achievement of strategic objectives
- The identification of required behaviours and processes to achieve future strategic objectives.
- Align leaders to the strategy and define their roles. It is the responsibility of managers to justify strategic objectives to lower levels of the organisation. The manager is also responsible to connect the strategic objectives to employee responsibilities, performance requirements and objectives.
- Visible commitment to strategy objectives by management. The strategic objectives must be communicated in a coordinated fashion to all employees. Senior managers must justify the following consistent messages to employees:
 - The strategy implemented is the correct strategy for the organisation.
 - Management as a whole are committed to the strategy in the applicable execution period.
 - The strategy fits in with the current organisational culture.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

- Defining and communicating clear and understood required outcomes that will determine success at the beginning. These outcomes must be easily measurable.

2.6 Strategy Execution in a Geographically Dispersed Organisation

Companies that operate in geographic dispersed areas encounter differing requirements and market conditions, thus requiring different approaches in delivering services or products (Pierce & Robinson, 2005). David (1997) states that geographical dispersed companies require strategies that are tailored specifically for the needs and characteristics of the clients within that area.

Pierce & Robinson (2005) also indicates that the inherent responsiveness to local market conditions that these companies have, is the key strategic advantage of this type of structure. This requires strategies at operational level (tactics) to be aligned to the needs of each geographical area specifically. The profit / loss responsibility of each area (or hub) also resides at this, the lowest strategic level. For successful strategy execution, close functional coordination is required with the target market (the customer). For successful attainment of objectives, the economy of effort of local operations must be optimised and synchronized.

Communication and simplification of strategic objectives are two very important factors to ensure the successful execution of strategy in geographically dispersed companies. Requirements for the successful alignment of strategy and operations are (Kaplan & Norton, 2008):

- The implementation of an effective performance management system.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

- Management and employees understand the organisation's mission, values and vision.
- Simplification of strategic objectives by applying specific and targeted initiatives.
- Motivate and drive performance through quantified and graphic information describing the strategic objectives.
- Management and employees must understand, buy into and support the strategy execution plan.
- Strong leadership from top management to steer the connection between strategy and operations.

To ensure effective execution of strategy, managers must ensure that all levels and areas of an organisation understand the link between strategic thought (knowing) and the tactical actions required (obtaining). This will enable middle management and their subordinates to successfully execute operational plans aligned with strategic objectives (Eicher, 2002).

Pleshko & Nickerson (2008) state that strategic orientation, instead of the structural configuration of an organisation, are most relevant to the overall performance of the organisation in strategy execution. This alignment with strategic objectives also incorporates adaptability within the organisation to external changes, when required (Pleshko & Nickerson, 2008).

Raps (2004) emphasises that traditional strategy execution approaches, as applied in most organisations, overemphasize organisational structural aspects and limitations in strategy

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

execution. This reduces the execution effort as a whole to a limited, repetitive and unfocussed organisational employment of resources. Raps (2004) suggests that, to counter this occurrence, an organisation's strategy execution effort should be a "no limitations" set of activities that does not concentrate on implications of only one component, such as an organisation's structure. The organisation should rather attempt to focus on all organisation-internal success factors responsible and required for successful strategy execution (Raps, 2004). These success factors, identified by Raps (2004) are:

- Culture. Organisational culture must serve as a motivational tool for employees in strategy execution. An organisation's culture must instil cooperation, dedication and depth of understanding of strategic objectives within an organisation.
- Organisation. Irrespective of the organisational structure, the assignment of responsibilities pertaining to strategy execution must be clear to lower level managers. The delivery of an organisation's strategic goals is the responsibilities of top management. These strategic goals are broken down into objectives, and are then delegated to the next level of responsible managers to attain.
- Human Resources. People are progressively becoming the key success factor for successful strategy execution. Successful strategy execution requires the support and proficiencies of an organisation's personnel, managerial as well as technical. The effective management of change during strategy execution requires that the resistance to change must not be underestimated. Effective communication must

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

continuously orientate personnel about the reasons for performing specified activities, as required by the strategic objectives of the organisation.

- Control Systems and Instruments. Management must have the ability to assess performance during strategy execution. This control function is critical to successful strategy execution. An effective control system will help managers to determine whether time and resource constraints are applied effectively and if they are aligned with the organisation's strategic objectives.

Hrebiniak & Joyce (1986) stipulate that an effective control system can also direct management's attention to short and long term challenges. They identified the following factors that influence the impact of a control system on an organisation:

- Ability to measure performance results;
- Clarity of cause-effect relations;
- Time horizons and planning cycles;
- Knowledge of which actions are most desirable;
- Emphasis on effectiveness versus efficiency;
- Product life cycles.

3 CHAPTER 3 - RESEARCH QUESTION

The following question is the main focus for review and clarification that will be evaluated as part of this research:

“How can the application of Simplicity as a principle of war, and its employment in military terms, be applied to a geographically dispersed organisation and improve strategy execution in the organisation?”

4 CHAPTER 4 – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This study will first explore the underlying reasons regarding why strategy execution fails in geographically dispersed organisations. From this result, it will be determined if the simplification of strategic objectives for execution by functional lower level managers could assist in the increased delivery on strategic objectives. Simplicity as a principle of war, and the key approaches and learning from military practitioners that have applied this principle in their military careers in execution, will greatly drive this investigation.

Operational managers are responsible for executing and controlling activities to achieve strategic objectives. However, if strategy fails, the reasons for failure are not always visible and quantifiable. For this reason, exploratory research will be required; to clarify and define the true nature of the problems (Zikmund, 2003). Exploratory research has as its aims to

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

search for insights into the general nature of a problem, identifying relevant variables and possible alternatives to be considered (Tustin, Lighelm, Martins & van Wyk, 2005). This research method can be highly flexible, unstructured and qualitative, including literature reviews, group and individual interviews. Exploratory research is best suited to establish priorities among research objectives (Tustin et al, 2005).

4.2 Research Approach

A case study approach will be followed with this research, as the focus of the research is mainly on determining “WHY” strategy execution is ineffective in a geographically dispersed organisation and “HOW” Simplicity as a principle of war can assist in the improvement of this occurrence. These questions are more focused on finding a link between continuous operational occurrences that occur over time, instead of frequent occurrences or incidents (Yin, 2003).

Case study research is also more appropriate and generalised to theoretical propositions and may not be valid in reviewing populations or universes (Yin, 2003).

The outcome of this research will identify specific criteria or reasons why strategy execution is ineffective in a geographically dispersed organisation, and attempt to recommend specific applications used in the military to assist in improving the execution phase, specifically related to the principle of war being Simplicity.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

A case study is a practical examination that investigates a current occurrence, where the link between the occurrence (Ineffective strategy execution) and the environment (A geographically dispersed organisation) are not clearly evident (Yin, 2003).

A case study is best suited for this research topic because multiple sources of evidence can be utilised and prior research and theoretical propositions can be used in the analysis of the objectives (Yin, 2003).

The components of a case study research, as defined by Yin (2003) are:

- A study question:

“Can the application of Simplicity as a principle of war, and its employment in military terms, be applied to a geographically dispersed organisation and improve strategy execution in the organisation?”
- Study objectives (propositions):
 - Objective 1: Determine the underlying causes of ineffectiveness in strategy execution in a geographically dispersed organisation;
 - Objective 2: Determine how Simplicity improves strategy execution in military organisations on the operational level.
 - Objective 3: Determine how the simplification of strategic objectives by means of the definition and tracking of short term goals can improve strategy execution in a geographically dispersed organisation.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

- Objective 4: Determine and define specific military approaches to strategy execution that can improve strategy execution in a geographically dispersed organisation.
- Unit of Analysis: A specific geographically dispersed organisation, with managers at all levels responsible for the delivery of strategic objectives. Babbie & Mouton (2003) state that the unit of analysis refers to the entity being investigated, thus an empirical research problem.
- Logically linking data to the propositions: Yin (2003) suggests the approach of “pattern matching” as best suited for this research. Internal validity of the case will be strengthened by comparing an empirical based pattern (Simplification of strategic objectives can improve strategy execution in a geographically dispersed organisation) with a predicted one (Simplifying strategic plans in the military ensure the successful execution of those plans).
- Criteria for interpreting the findings: The approaches to Simplicity, as applied in military will be measured and compared to certain indicators found as well as reasons why strategies are ineffectively executed in a geographically dispersed organisation.

This research was conducted in 4 phases, namely:

- Phase 1: Investigation into the main reasons and indicators why strategy execution is not fully effective in an identified geographical dispersed organisation.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

- Audience: Managers at all levels of an identified geographical dispersed organisation.
- Method:
 - Qualitative: Interviews with key managers, as identified by the researcher and organisation senior management, to attain specific insights into problems related directly to:
 - The strategy of the organisation and understandings of it;
 - The status and success level of current strategy implementation practices;
 - Shortcomings as experienced in the roll-out of strategic plans and attainment of strategic objectives in the organisation;
 - Proposed improvements, as perceived in the execution of strategy in the organisation.
 - Quantitative: A survey distributed to managers, measuring the main inhibitors of effective strategy execution in the organisation.
- Output: Identification of shortcomings and inhibitors of effective strategy execution.
- Phase 2: Review of the application of Simplicity in the military context.
 - Audience: Military personnel (currently serving) with specific expertise and experience in the execution of operations and tactical plans in the military domain. Preference was given to military personnel with operational (sharp-

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

- end) experience, as opposed to support function commanders (logistics and personnel management).
- Method: Semi-structured interviews, where approaches to Simplicity and its impact on military operational execution were reviewed and insights on the attainment of strategic and operational objectives were formally captured. These interviews also focussed on the expansion on certain specific approaches to Simplicity of strategic and operational objectives.
 - Output: More defined inputs and specific tools and approaches to Simplicity during execution of military operations.
 - Phase 3: The matching of successful military approaches to Simplicity with the main identified drivers of ineffective strategy execution in a geographical dispersed organisation.
 - Method: Application of the “pattern-matching” approach that identified specific shortcomings in the execution of strategy in the organisation and these were matched with specific military approaches to Simplicity to negate the cause.
 - Output: Tabular list of strategy execution inhibitors in the geographically dispersed organisation, with matched approaches to Simplicity from interviews with military professionals.
 - Phase 4: The compilation of a specific model and tools of simplification as a suggested application tool in a geographical dispersed organisation.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

- Method: Reviewed inhibitors to successful strategy execution in the organisation and developed a model, based on military thought and knowledge, in conjunction with identified military experts. This would be able to address, invalidate or circumvent these inhibitors by means of a specific model. This model can then be applied to the organisation to determine its effectiveness in strategy execution.
- Output: A model for strategy execution with tools and techniques to ensure the simplification of strategic objectives in execution.

4.3 Research Limitations

The research conducted will have the following limitations to be noted:

- A single company in a single industry will be used, with a geographically dispersed organisational structure. Therefore, the results may not be relevant and applicable to other companies or industries.
- The focus of the research will be on the execution of a business strategy by operational managers in a geographically dispersed organisation. Results may differ from other organisational structures and support functions within the company.

5 CHAPTER 5 – RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the following will be reviewed:

- The responses from the interviews with personnel in the geographically dispersed organisation;
- The results from the survey conducted within the geographically dispersed organisation;
- The responses from the interviews conducted with senior military personnel.

To gain insight into the research problem, data collected included opinions from personnel currently employed full time by the geographically dispersed organisation and currently serving military personnel (one Major General and two Brigadier Generals) in the South African Army. The survey conducted was also forwarded to and completed by current full-time employees of the geographically dispersed organisation.

The data collected was sorted, reviewed and will be presented according to the Research Question in Chapter 3 and the Study Objectives as identified in Chapter 4. These objectives are:

- Objective 1: Determine the underlying causes of ineffectiveness in strategy execution in a geographically dispersed organisation.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

- Objective 2: Determine how Simplicity improves strategy execution in military organisations on the operational level.
- Objective 3: Determine how the simplification of strategic objectives by means of the definition and tracking of short term goals can improve strategy execution in a geographically dispersed organisation.
- Objective 4: Determine and define specific military approaches to strategy execution that can improve strategy execution in a geographically dispersed organisation.

To effectively review the data and information collected during the execution of this research, a structured approach will be followed. The structure is as follows:

- Step 1: Review the geographically dispersed organisation as a background to the research problem definition.
- Step 2: Describe and explain the information obtained in the interviews and survey, as described in phases 1 and 2 of the research defined in Chapter 4:
 - Phase 1: Investigate the main reasons and indicators that inhibit successful strategy execution in the identified geographical dispersed organisation;
 - Phase 2: Review the application of Simplicity in the military context;

Phases 3 and 4, as defined in chapter 4 will be discussed in the next chapter, as they pertain to the evaluation and interpretation of data and information as gathered in Phases 1 and 2.

5.2 Host Company Description

To obtain a better understanding of interview and survey responses, a description of the geographically dispersed company is required. This company will be henceforth referred to as the “Host Company”.

The Host Company is a subsidiary of a privately held organisation. The Host Company provides dry bulk material handling services, crushing and screening and minerals beneficiation services on an outsourced basis. This implies that the Host Company has a substantial fleet of mobile equipment for moving and managing materials on mines and smelters on an outsourced basis, in both their raw and beneficiated form.

In addition the Host Company designs, builds, operates and maintains fixed and semi-fixed plant and conveyors in these service areas for their customers. Innovative, cost-effective solutions for moving and managing minerals and waste is the hallmark of the Host Company as it responds to anticipated customer needs. Services range from stockpiling and feeding materials for collieries and metals processing plants to disposing of coal discard and ash in an environmentally acceptable manner. The Host Company has a close association with the mining industry and Ferro metals producers within South Africa.

The Head Office is situated in Johannesburg, with regional hub offices in the Mpumalanga, Gauteng, the Northern Cape and North West provinces. The Host Company is currently divided into 2 distinctive operational business units, namely Coal and Metals. Operational Directors are appointed for the functioning of these business units.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

Within these business units area managers are responsible for the operational functioning of defined hub areas, allocated according to clients. Hub areas are sub-divided into Site Offices, situated at client premises. A simplified illustration of this operational organisational setup is as follows:

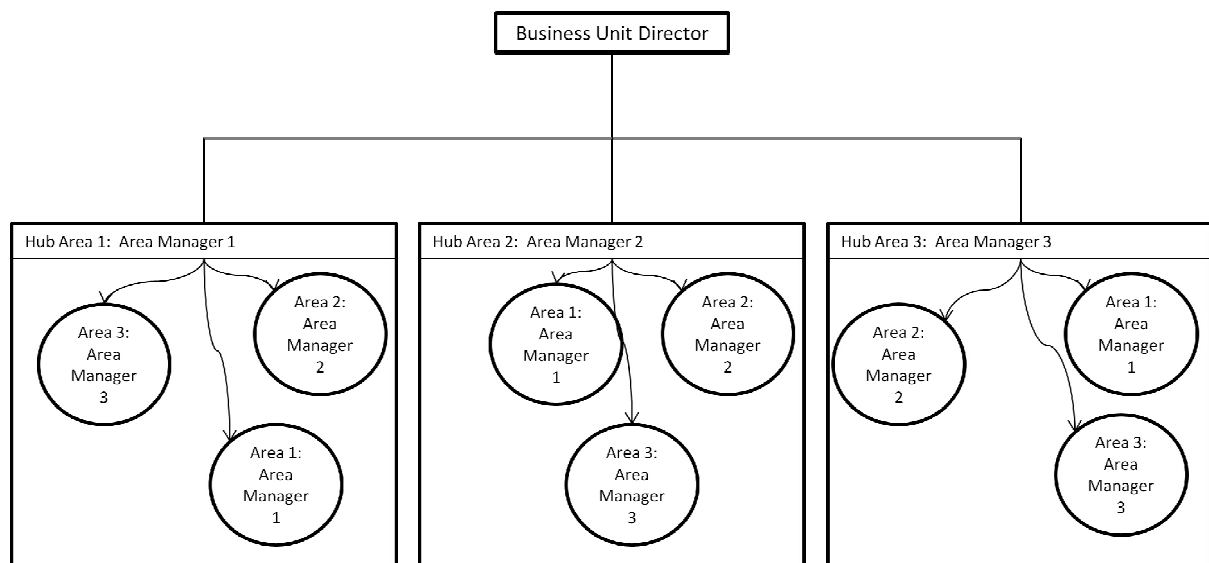


Figure 5-1 Operational Organisation Structure

The Host Company aims to be the “preferred supplier” of services in every area it operates. It applies a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) system to manage the organisation effectively. This system is broken down into:

- Creating Shareholder Value by:
 - Maintaining required Gross Profit Margins as defined per area and site;
 - Delivering the required Return on Investment Capital (ROIC) per site;
 - Successfully negotiating contract escalations, reviewed at least yearly.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

- Ensuring sustainable growth by:
 - Continuously increasing customer value;
 - Pro-active efforts to expand the business in existing areas.
- Increasing productivity by:
 - Improving asset utilisation;
 - Improving cost structures;
 - Effective and standardised procurement management.
- Continuous learning and growth by:
 - Improving employee competencies through training and exposure;
 - Establishing and maintaining a climate for action and innovation.
- Compliance with regulatory and environmental requirements by:
 - Reviewing and applying policies and procedures to ensure legal compliance;
 - Developing and maintaining Health and Safety standards and policies.

It must be noted that although the Host Company applies standardised policies and procedures (through a system called the Library of Standards (LOS)) to govern operational activities within the organisation, operations and the application of assets and equipment can differ from site to site and even from area to area.

5.3 Host Company Survey

A questionnaire was distributed to all senior, middle and lower level management in the Host Company with access to e-mail facilities. The questionnaire consisted of 19 questions (see Appendix A). The first two questions were aimed at determining the years of service

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

with the company and the direct reports in the company to the manager. The remaining questions were aimed at determining possible main reasons and indicators that inhibit successful strategy execution in the applicable Host Company. Respondents were given the opportunity to answer posed questions with 3 possible answers:

- Yes – the respondent is of the opinion that the question posed is true and applicable to the Host Company.
- No – the respondent is of the opinion that the question posed is not true and applicable to the Host Company.
- Uncertain – the respondent is unclear whether the response to the question is true or believes the stated is not present or applicable to the Host Company.

The researcher specifically gave this option as a possible answer, as it could indicate that respondents were not familiar with specifics of strategy execution and this could indicate other shortcomings.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to give comments on any question, if they felt required to do so. This would assist in clarifying certain reasons and insights into why a certain answer was given, specifically indications of uncertainty.

Questionnaires were forwarded to 228 managers within the Host Company. 52 questionnaires were completed and returned to the researcher. From these respondents the distribution between the levels of management is as follows:

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

- Senior Management – 15 (29% of total respondents). Senior Management includes the Managing Director, Directors and senior managers reporting directly to them.
- Middle Management – 14 (27% of total respondents). Middle management includes Area Managers and Head Office Department managers.
- Lower Management – 23 (44% of total respondents). Include Site Managers, Safety Managers and Site Clerks, Training officials, as well as Area Offices' functional managers.

This is illustrated as follows:

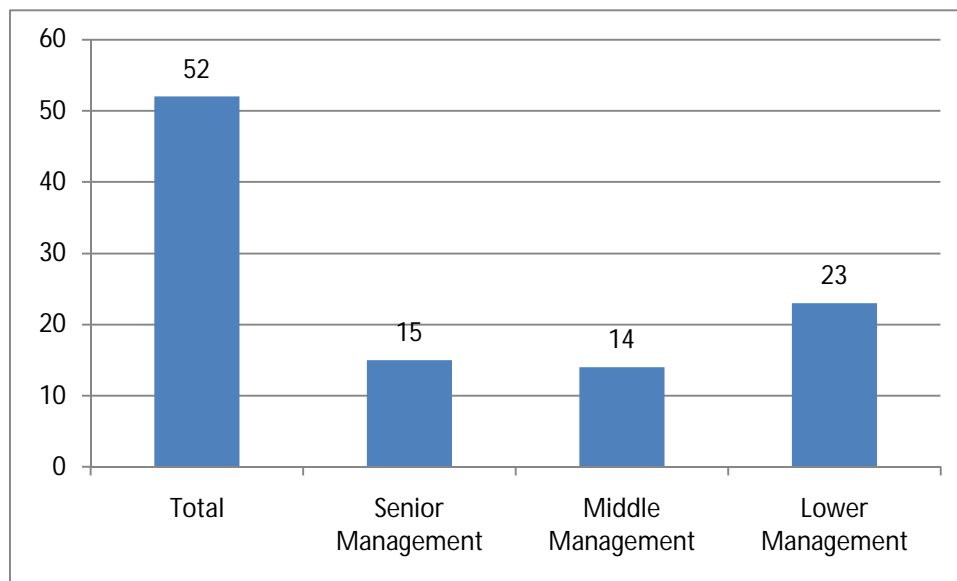


Figure 5-2 Questionnaire Respondents Distribution

The specific questions were drawn up after reviewing the requirements for successful strategy execution at organisational level as identified by Evans and Richardson (2008), Frigo (2003), Hrebiniak (2004) and Pearce & Robinson (2005), and as discussed in the Literature Review under heading 2.5.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

In reviewing these writings, the following 4 main requirements were identified as most applicable to successful strategy execution in an organisation, with the mentioned literature indicated:

No.	Main Requirements	Evans & Richardson (2008)	Frigo (2003)	Hrebiniak (2004)	Pearce & Robinson (2005)
1	Clear and simplified short term measurable plans aligned with the organisations long term strategic objectives.			X	X
2	Effective and simplified change management capabilities to adapt to influencing factors internally and externally	X	X	X	
3	Employee empowerment with clear responsibilities and accountabilities during execution to ensure clarity on required goals, the desired outcome, expectations and subsequent rewards	X	X	X	X
4	The organisation, its structure and functioning is aligned with short term goals and long term objectives as required	X	X	X	X

Table 5-1 Main requirements and Literature comparison

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

These main requirements were used as inputs for the survey questions with results indicated as follows:

5.3.1 Requirement 1: Clear and simplified short term measureable plans aligned with the organisations long term strategic objectives.

No.	Survey Question Number	Responses			
1	Question 3				
	Do you understand the strategic objectives of your organisation?	Overall	Senior Management	Middle Management	Lower Management
	Yes	73%	73%	50%	87%
	No	4%	0%	14%	0%
	Uncertain	23%	27%	36%	13%
	Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There exists some inconsistency in the understanding of the strategy at all levels. • The objectives are continuously communicated, but there is uncertainty with regard to the specific strategy applied to achieve them. 			
No.	Survey Question Number	Responses			
2	Question 7				
	Does your organisation apply any methods or approaches to reduce the uncertainty and complexity associated with strategic plan execution requirements?	Overall	Senior Management	Middle Management	Lower Management
	Yes	50%	60%	36%	52%
	No	25%	27%	36%	17%
	Uncertain	25%	13%	29%	30%
	Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not at this stage. We address changes as they occur, and the effects of this sometimes could have been avoided. • The execution of strategy is sometimes more complex than it should be and we cannot react to changes. • Issues are made more complex by some managers, where the requirement should only be passed down to execution levels. 			

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

No.	Survey Question Number	Responses			
3	Question 10				
	Do you consider the strategic plans of your organisation to be easily understandable?	Overall	Senior Management	Middle Management	Lower Management
	Yes	69%	73%	43%	83%
	No	12%	7%	29%	4%
	Uncertain	19%	20%	29%	13%
	Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is understood at high levels, but not always on site. The strategic plans are not simple and clear, and thus cannot be understood by all. All employees are not informed on the whole strategy, but only on some sections they are involved in, i.e. safety objectives. 			

Table 5-2 Successful Execution Requirement 1 and responses

5.3.2 Requirement 2: Effective and simplified change management capabilities to adapt to influencing factors internally and externally.

No.	Survey Question Number	Responses			
1	Question 17				
	Is the change in environment or client requirements managed effectively during operational execution in your organisation?	Overall	Senior Management	Middle Management	Lower Management
	Yes	62%	40%	71%	70%
	No	13%	27%	0%	13%
	Uncertain	25%	33%	29%	17%
	Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is too much planning and meetings without things getting done. Too slow and reactive. Needs to be more client-focussed and more dynamic with less central latency. Areas need to be empowerment to move and adapt fast. 			

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

No.	Survey Question Number	Responses			
2	Question 18				
	Do operational managers in your organisation take ownership (responsibility) for the achievement of strategic objectives?	Overall	Senior Management	Middle Management	Lower Management
	Yes	58%	47%	50%	70%
	No	13%	20%	7%	13%
	Uncertain	29%	33%	43%	17%
	Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most managers are result orientated. • Some take responsibility for these objectives. Others believe they are only responsible for certain, i.e. safety only. • The understanding and interpretation of objectives are sometimes not clear. 			

Table 5-3 Successful Execution Requirement 2 and responses

5.3.3 Requirement 3: Employee empowerment with clear responsibilities and accountabilities during execution to ensure clarity on required goals, the desired outcome, expectations and subsequent rewards.

No.	Survey Question Number	Responses			
1	Question 4				
	Have the organisation's strategic objectives been formally communicated to you?	Overall	Senior Management	Middle Management	Lower Management
	Yes	67%	73%	50%	74%
	No	27%	27%	43%	17%
	Uncertain	6%	0%	7%	9%
	Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The objectives are not discussed and communicated to the desired level and detail. • Defined measurement criteria are not always given • Strategic objectives are periodically discussed with Area Managers and up, but not to lower levels. • Strategic objectives seem to change regularly; they are often unclear and are not communicated effectively. 			

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

No.	Survey Question Number	Responses			
2	Question 5				
	In your opinion, do you contribute to the attainment of the strategic objectives in the execution of your daily tasks?	Overall	Senior Management	Middle Management	Lower Management
	Yes	77%	93%	64%	74%
	No	6%	0%	21%	0%
	Uncertain	17%	7%	14%	26%
	Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact and discussions with the management team are not regular enough to ascertain this. Definitely some long term objectives, but not shorter term requirements, as these changes are not always communicated or clear. 			
No.	Survey Question Number	Responses			
3	Question 8				
	Are rewards in your organisation aligned with the attainment of predefined and communicated goals on a yearly basis?	Overall	Senior Management	Middle Management	Lower Management
	Yes	33%	47%	36%	22%
	No	40%	33%	50%	39%
	Uncertain	27%	20%	14%	39%
	Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only some personnel are linked to operational performance rewards. Rewards are based on profitability, safety performance and cash management, and not on success in strategy execution. More than 90% of employees are not part of the profit-share scheme in the company. 			

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

No.	Survey Question Number	Responses			
4	Question 9				
	Are rewards in your organisation aligned with the attainment of predefined and communicated goals on a shorter term than a yearly basis?	Overall	Senior Management	Middle Management	Lower Management
	Yes	33%	47%	50%	13%
	No	35%	27%	29%	43%
	Uncertain	33%	27%	21%	43%
	Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only some personnel are linked to operational performance rewards. • Profit share is limited to certain employees and paid every 4 months. 			
No.	Survey Question Number	Responses			
5	Question 11				
	Do you consider the strategic objectives of your organisation to clearly state the intent of the Executive Committee (Exco)? Are the objectives indicative of the direction the organisation is attempting to head into?	Overall	Senior Management	Middle Management	Lower Management
	Yes	50%	53%	43%	52%
	No	19%	33%	21%	9%
	Uncertain	31%	13%	36%	39%
	Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategic plans are not simple and clear, and thus cannot be understood by all. • A consistent and clear message is not always evident at all levels. 			
No.	Survey Question Number	Responses			
6	Question 14				
	Do your responsibilities in the organisation contribute directly to achieving strategic objectives?	Overall	Senior Management	Middle Management	Lower Management
	Yes	75%	80%	79%	70%
	No	4%	7%	7%	0%
	Uncertain	21%	13%	14%	30%
	Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibilities and the link to strategic objectives are not always understood due to ineffective communication, and the misunderstanding of what is required. 			

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

No.	Survey Question Number	Responses			
7	Question 15				
	Are strategic objectives translated into understandable operational targets for you to achieve?	Overall	Senior Management	Middle Management	Lower Management
	Yes	67%	67%	64%	70%
	No	13%	20%	14%	9%
	Uncertain	19%	13%	21%	22%
	Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not at all levels. • The system is not dynamic enough currently. If the strategy is understood by everyone, the target has already moved. 			
No.	Survey Question Number	Responses			
8	Question 16				
	Do your tactical actions plans (the way you work) contribute directly to the attainment of your organisation's strategic objectives?	Overall	Senior Management	Middle Management	Lower Management
	Yes	79%	93%	71%	74%
	No	6%	7%	7%	4%
	Uncertain	15%	0%	21%	22%
	Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is constantly challenged in terms of strategic objectives. This is a reactive approach. 			

Table 5-4 Successful Execution Requirement 3 and responses

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

5.3.4 Requirement 4: The organisation, its structure and functioning is aligned with short term goals and long term objectives as required.

No.	Survey Question Number	Responses			
1	Question 6				
	Does your organisation consider your capabilities and limitations when setting goals for you / your section?	Overall	Senior Management	Middle Management	Lower Management
	Yes	65%	73%	50%	70%
	No	8%	7%	21%	0%
	Uncertain	27%	20%	29%	30%
	Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation is minimal. • Some managers in the organisation do not have the capability to execute their functions effectively, placing unnecessary pressure on others. • There is sometimes limited consistency in the consideration of capabilities and limitations when work is distributed. 			
No.	Survey Question Number	Responses			
2	Question 12				
	Are operational requirements in your organisation complementary to the strategy?	Overall	Senior Management	Middle Management	Lower Management
	Yes	58%	60%	57%	57%
	No	10%	13%	14%	4%
	Uncertain	33%	27%	29%	39%
	Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where the strategy is well defined and communicated, this is evident. • Operational requirements are adjusted with changes in strategy. 			

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

No.	Survey Question Number	Responses			
3	Question 13				
	Are all departments in your organisation committed to the strategy of the organisation in execution?	Overall	Senior Management	Middle Management	Lower Management
	Yes	38%	53%	36%	30%
	No	23%	20%	14%	30%
	Uncertain	38%	27%	50%	39%
	Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head office is sometimes considered a bottleneck in service delivery. • The required capabilities and tools are not always made available to execute the strategy. 			
No.	Survey Question Number	Responses			
4	Question 19				
	Do operational managers in your organisation take ownership (responsibility) for the achievement of strategic objectives?	Overall	Senior Management	Middle Management	Lower Management
	Yes	46%	33%	43%	57%
	No	27%	47%	29%	13%
	Uncertain	27%	20%	29%	30%
	Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There could be more effective use of resources in order to capitalise on time frames. • Urgency of service delivery is not up to standard at Head Office. • Until objectives become clear time-frames will be meaningless. • There is a great deal room for improvement. 			

Table 5-5 Successful Execution Requirement 4 and responses

5.4 Host Company Interviews

Open ended interviews were also conducted with 5 full time employees from the Host Company, distributed as follows:

- 1 Senior Manager (SM)
- 2 Middle Managers (MM)
- 2 Lower Managers (LM)

Appendix B indicates the guiding questions that were posed to these employees during these interviews. These interviews were recorded and the main inputs are discussed below, under the headings of the guiding questions.

5.4.1 Responsibility for Strategy Execution

The SM and MM respondents indicated that the Executive Committee (Exco) is responsible for strategy execution in the Host Company. The SM respondent stated that the Exco receive guidance from the Group Exco on a yearly basis. The Host Company Exco team is then responsible for defining the strategic objectives in line with these guidelines received. This is defined in a yearly planning cycle conducted. A MM respondent indicated that the operational directors remain responsible for the execution of strategic objectives throughout the year.

A LM respondent indicated that he is not familiar with these responsibilities. He stated that the tasks at his level are day-to-day focussed. He receives instructions on required

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

deliverables and executes them. His functional role is purely focussed on operational targets. The other LM respondent indicated that operational directors are accountable for strategy execute, whilst responsibility is delegated down the structure to applicable levels.

5.4.2 Responsibility for communication of strategic objectives

The SM respondent indicated that directors are responsible for communication of strategic objectives to area and functional managers. Another communication medium is the quarterly communication session conducted by the Managing Director (MD). This session is attended by area managers and other higher ranking employees and provides the MD the opportunity to address any relevant matters with the personnel in a formal and structured manner. Communication in the business units are managed at the discretion of the director. There is no standardised approach to this communication. Strategic objectives differ between business units and are guided by Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that the directors receive.

A MM respondent indicated that there is no official directive guiding strategic objective communication. The strategy of the organisation is only broadly discussed at the communication session, chaired by the MD. This session is however ineffective as it is still high level and only attempts to define the objectives, instead of obtain commitment and buy-in.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

The other MM respondent stated that the intent of Exco is vague and unclear, leading to rumours and uncertainty. Different messages reach the different levels of the organisation and this has conflicting interpretations and focuses within the Host Company.

The LM respondents indicated that directors are responsible for communicating the strategic objectives to the area managers, who in turn must communicate it to the lower levels. Communication must flow down the organisation.

5.4.3 Common organisational focus on attaining strategic objectives

The SM respondent explained that there is a common focus with the company. All objectives are aligned with the company values. It is the responsibility of every business unit to align KPIs with these values.

The MM respondents however indicated that there is limited alignment and focus between business units. The objectives of the 2 operational units differ and there is a lack of cohesiveness on the higher levels. There is definitely room for improvement on focus at the executive level. This lack of cohesiveness can be attributed to structural differences, historic influences, leadership approaches and egos. The effect of this is the existence of operational silos in which execution is done differently.

The other MM respondent also indicated that a perception exists that only the directors understand and need to understand strategic objectives.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

The LM respondents stated that within their areas and functions there are a common focus. They receive guidelines from their superiors with the other team members on their level. This ensures that everyone present has the same understanding of what is required. Specific groups receive specific objectives together.

5.4.4 Communication of strategic objectives to all responsible levels

According to the SM respondent communication of objectives to lower levels occur in a structured manner through the formalised MD communication sessions. However, the planning for and actual execution is left to the discretion of the operational directors.

A MM respondent explained that information becomes more vague as it goes down through the organisation, as inconsistent focus exists on how strategic objectives should be interpreted and communicated.

A LM respondent stated that he receives communication on operational matters daily from his area manager, either face to face or through e-mails. There are also weekly production meetings where operational targets and other issues are discussed.

5.4.5 Tracking of progress towards attaining strategic objectives

The SM respondent indicated that he conducts regular communication sessions with his subordinates, formally and informally, to determine the status and progress on tasks attributing to the attainment of strategic objectives. At Exco meetings the discussion and feedback on progress on strategic objectives is a fixed agenda point. However, feedback is

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

issue driven and only matters that require escalation or decisions are discussed. No standardised feedback procedure or fixed format exists. The Exco meeting has a very strong operational focus and this caused a break in synchronisation between business units on the progress of strategic initiatives. He is also of the opinion that area managers are not synchronised in terms of the requirements and importance of strategic objectives, and progress is not clear to all involved or influenced by the objective attainment.

A MM respondent stated that there is no official reporting structure in his business unit or the company to guide the reporting of critical points or to verify alignment. He has identified goals in line with his given objectives and tracks them monthly. The main effect of this shortcoming is that there is very little buy-in on actively focussing and working towards strategic objectives. He also supplies official reports to his director on progress, but this is not a standardised process.

The other MM respondent indicated that at Area Manager and lower levels the focus is on financial indicators only. A major shortcoming is tracking availability and utilisation of equipment in specific areas, as this is not clear in financial reporting. This focus on financial indicators causes sites to protect internal capabilities in reserve (spare machinery as required by the client to be on standby) instead of applying them on ad hoc and opportunist works. Sites do not understand the bigger picture and this attributes to silos being formed within the business units as well. Sites do not communicate with each other and do not coordinate on opportunities to apply machinery between them. This effect is not always

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

visible on the specific site, but the effect becomes evident when reviewing efficiencies between areas business units and the Host Company.

The LM respondents explained that operational activities are tracked daily and reported to the direct line superiors. Formal feedback meetings also occur weekly or bi-weekly where production is reviewed and decisions pertaining to operations are made. These activities and forums do not encourage discussion about the progress in terms of attaining strategic objectives. The focus is purely driven by operational short term results.

5.4.6 Setting short term goals aligned with strategic objectives

The SM respondent stated that strategic objectives are not broken down into shorter term goals. A requirement exists to find a practical, workable solution to mobilise these objectives, which can be standardised and applied throughout the organisation. The current Library of Standards (LOS) approach can be applied as the tool to standardise this. The LOS approach is use by the Host Company to fix policies and procedures throughout the company. It also defines and governs reporting requirements and governance.

Both MM respondents indicated that objectives are not broken down into measureable short term goals. A major shortcoming of the current strategy is that it is developed and rolled out with no input from the lower levels in a top-down approach. The effect of this is that there is very little buy-in from lower levelS through the whole cycle. Objectives are stated, resources are given and desired outcomes defined without considering the current

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

status, limitations and capabilities. The focus remains on operational indicators, mainly delivering services to clients at an optimal R per ton amount at the area and site level..

The LM respondents indicated that only monthly production targets are given.

5.4.7 Alignment of capabilities and limitations to strategic objectives

Both the SM respondent and MM respondents indicated that the lower level capabilities and limitations are not optimally considered in defining strategic objectives. Certain strategic decisions have been taken in the past without inputs or considerations of expertise from lower levels, with significant effects on the company.

Certain sites are clearly more profitable and efficient than others, even with the same equipment applied and similar scope of works, indicating that internal factors were not considered.

LM respondents indicated that they expect this planning to be done by their superiors and only execute tasks as received by them. Sites will attempt to reach targets as given with the resources and capabilities available to them and will escalate challenges to operational feedback meetings.

5.4.8 Clarity and understanding of strategic objectives at all levels

The SM respondent indicated that a clear understanding of strategic objectives is not evident in the Host Company. This is an area that requires urgent attention as misalignment causes inefficiencies throughout the company. There has been a significant improvement

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

with reference to communication to the area managers' level in the last few months, but the effects of communication from there to lower levels are not clear. The message communicated from area managers to site managers and lower level employees as well as the interpretation thereof is also not clear. He considers the impact of this communication specifically on site level as a major concern, as this area ensures the revenue stream health of the organisation. The simplification of required outcomes is a major requirement to ensure alignment to the strategy throughout the whole company. For this to become a reality, 2 way communication (up and down) must be healthy. Another requirement is to develop the ability to translate high level information into understandable lower level messages that are comprehensible and applicable to the lower level employees.

The MM respondents stated that lower level management do not understand the company's strategy. Coordination is required on SM level to break down existing silos and to communicate the correct bigger picture to the organisation as a whole. Lower level management is not able to influence strategic objectives, because they had no input in defining the strategy. Currently area and site management focus is short term driven and operationally focussed. More focus is required on developing efficiencies at lower level.

The LM respondents indicated that alignment to strategic objectives is the responsibility of area managers and that they are dependent on the area managers to guide them in the execution of their operational tasks. A LM respondent also indicated that there is currently uncertainty with reference to the company's strategy at SM level. This uncertainty with

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

regard to the strategic direction of the organisation flows down into the organisation and causes major misalignments, confusion and rumours with the organisation.

5.5 Military Personnel Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 3 current generals serving in the SA Army.

These generals are:

- Major-General X, a Chief Director at the SA Army Headquarters in Pretoria;
- Brigadier-General Y, a Director at the SA Army Headquarters in Pretoria;
- Brigadier-General Z, a General Officer Commanding of a brigade.

Appendix C indicates the guiding questions that were posed to the generals during these interviews. These interviews were recorded and main inputs are discussed below, under the headings of the guiding questions.

5.5.1 Introduction and General discussion

Traditionally, strategic objectives are filtered down from strategic level to technical level in the SA Army (See Figure 5-3 below). The formulation process of strategic objectives answers 3 criteria, namely:

- What are the objectives? (ENDS)
- What are the concepts to apply to obtain these objectives? (WAYS)
- What are the means available to obtain these objectives? (MEANS)

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

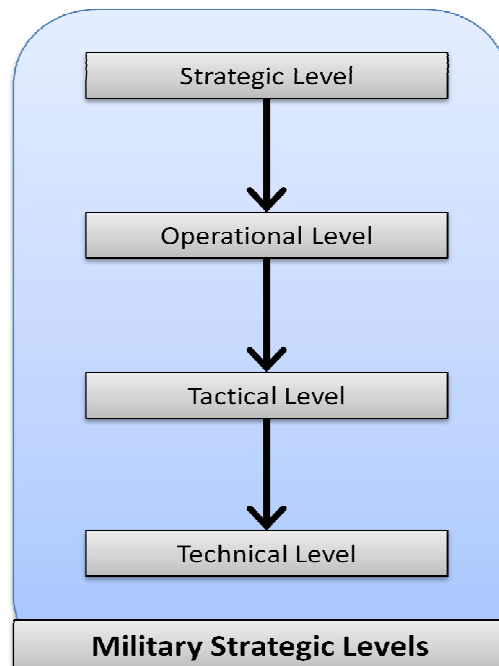


Figure 5-3 SA Army Levels of Military Strategy

In the SA Army the definition and attainment of strategic objectives are the responsibility of the Chief of the SA Army and his General Staff. They formulate the strategy for the SA Army from objectives and requirements received from Chief of the SANDF (South African National Defence Force).

Operational objectives are formulated from the strategic objectives by Formation Headquarters and Combat Formations (43 and 46 SA Brigades) at the Operational Level and communicated to the Tactical Level. SA Army units (Battalions and Regiments) are responsible for the execution of and delivery on these objectives. Tactical execution occurs on the Technical Level (the physical troops and equipment on the ground). Figure 5-4 illustrated these levels below:

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

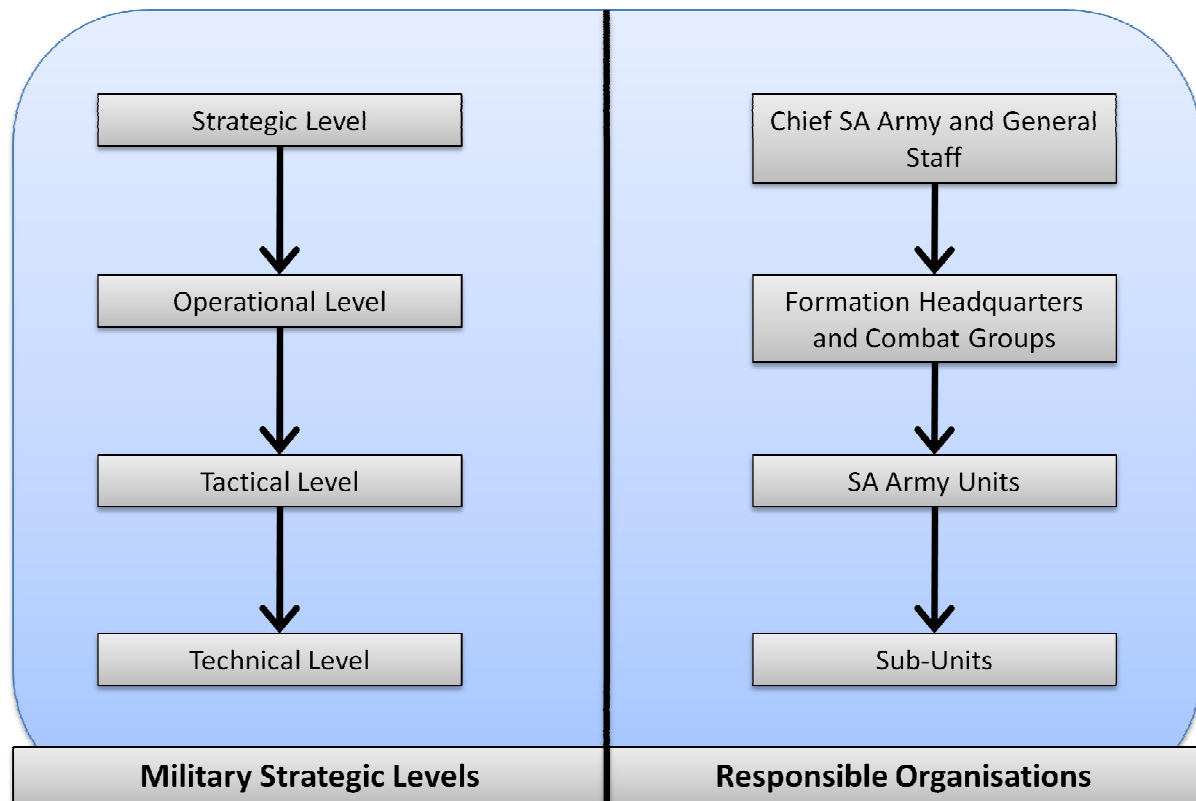


Figure 5-4 Strategic Levels and SA Army Organisation

A very important principle to this process is that a commander must always understand the strategic intent of his superior commanders 2 levels up (This implies that on the Tactical level, a unit commander must understand the strategic intent of the Chief of the SA Army and his General Staff). The reason for this is to ensure that the commander on the Tactical level cannot operate outside the framework of the high-level strategic intent.

The SA Army applies the Mission Command principle through all levels of the organisation. This basically implies that authority and responsibility should lie at the level where decisions are made during execution in an organisation. The higher commander defines the means and desired End-State and the lower responsible commander formulates the plan for

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

execution and is responsible for the execution. Tom & Barrons (2006) define Mission Command as "... the system of delegation and empowerment used in the Armed Forces today and has come about through necessity."

Mission Command can only be successful if the responsible commander has the required knowledge and abilities to execute at a specific level.

To be able to execute a plan at any level effectively, a superior commander must ensure the following is present at that level:

- The best suited person is in the command position;
- The required means to execute is available to him;
- The subordinate commander has the freedom of action to be able to execute the plan.

5.5.2 Internal obstacles to strategy execution in the military

Firstly, the inability of commanders to ensure that their subordinates understand their intention (ENDS) completely is a major obstacle to successful strategy execution. For a subordinate commander to understand his role and responsibilities, he has to also know exactly what his flank forces are doing. This is to ensure that he executes what is expected of him and does not keep himself engaged in activities for which other commanders are responsible. If a subordinate commander understands this framework, it allows and empowers him to creatively achieve his assigned intermediate End-State, thus contributing to the overall End-State.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

Secondly, not providing the required resources (personnel and equipment) to execute their activities is another important challenge that needs to be overcome. A commander must ensure that his subordinate commanders have all the resources (MEANS) available to them to facilitate their ability to execute a task successfully.

Thirdly, there must be no uncertainty about the parameters and guidelines in which subordinate commanders must execute their responsibilities. The commander must ensure that he defines and communicates the "HOW" clearly to his subordinate commanders (WAYS). Some of the most threatening obstacles are in this environment.

If one does not allow for subordinates to function in a challenging environment, they are not stimulated and stretched to their limits. Being too prescriptive in the "WAYS", inhibits creativity and prevents accepting responsibility and ownership, because it is somebody else's ideas.

Subordinates must have freedom of action in order to enhance decentralised decision making. In this regard a strategy/higher order objective, spells out what is required (the END-STATE). In addition to the "what", guidelines provide planning and execution parameters.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

5.5.3 Applying Simplicity to overcome internal obstacles

A campaign plan is to be kept as simple as possible. This allows subordinates to grasp what is to be achieved and where they fit into the picture. The notion of a “Single aim” at all levels is of utmost importance in order to ensure Simplicity. This enables participants to focus on one issue within a specific time frame. To attain Simplicity, logic and common sense have to prevail. The reasons for the construct must be explained ad nauseam by the higher commander personally to ensure this. One-on-one discussions to test subordinates’ grasp of a plan is very important. Through this the commander can ensure that a common picture prevails. Subordinate commanders must also have the complete overall plan available to study it in order to facilitate understanding. The common operation picture must be maintained during execution through a proper situational awareness plan to ensure all commanders are on the same “sheet of music”.

The SA Army has developed a model that is applied as a planning framework to mobilise subordinate commanders one level lower. This model is described by the acronym POSTEDFITB, comprising of the following elements:

- P - Personnel. The personnel available to the commander to attain the desired End-State, defined as individuals and strength (quantities).
- O - Organisation. The composition of the structure of personnel available.
- S - Sustainment. The support and maintenance capabilities available to the commander during execution.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

- T - Training. The required skills and qualification that will be required or that must be developed to attain the desired End-State.
- E - Equipment. The equipment allocated to the commander for the duration of execution.
- D - Doctrine. The policies and procedures that must be adhered to during execution.
- F - Facilities. Infrastructure and facilities available during execution
- I - Information. Information and data that the commander will require during planning and execution to assist him.
- T - Technology. Specific technological capabilities that will be available to the commander during planning and execution.
- B - Budget. The financial means available to the commander for execution is stipulated, to assist him in planning.

Superior commanders will give a specific objective (END-STATE) to a commander, but will populate each of these elements with specific means and capabilities (MEANS) to the disposal of the commander. He is then responsible to draw up a plan considering these means per element (WAYS) and present it to the superior commander for approval.

This ensures that any required End-State is simplified to a level that all influencing factors and requirements are clear to the commander and defined within the framework.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

5.5.4 Levels to which objectives are communicated and how commanders ensure these objectives are understood

A commander must communicate his objectives at least two levels down. Personal visits, liaison and discussions with subordinate officers will facilitate the understanding of objectives. This will also allow the commander to clarify uncertainties that exist with the commanders who will execute the operation. This inspires confidence and promotes the feeling of co-accountability. Another advantage of this personal contact is that it will contribute to the overall confidence of subordinate commanders by recognising their roles in the military organisation responsible for execution of an operation.

Together, and equally important to the feeling of co-accountability, is the fact that a commander must understand the intent of his commanders at least 2 levels up. This ensures that he plans his execution within the boundaries of the stated intent of those commanders.

Ideally a commander will plan an operation with his direct subordinates. This ensures that more ideas and clarity is obtained at both levels and saves on planning and communication time. This also facilitates the principle of "Independent Check", as he has the opportunity to bounce his plan off subordinates who will be responsible for executing specific tasks. Also, these subordinates have the technical competencies to ensure all factors are considered, as they are the resources and they use the means to execute.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

5.5.5 Characteristics of a force capable of achieving the commander's objectives

- Enabled. Subordinate commanders must be enabled. Thus, they have the means and resources to execute their responsibilities at their disposal. Also, they are empowered with the necessary training to successfully deliver on the required stated objectives.
- Prepared. All plans must be rehearsed with subordinate commanders. This will ensure that all logistical preparations are in place and that they are psychologically prepared for the task at hand. Lastly, a well prepared and trained commander has the confidence to be successful in executing an operation.
- Motivated. An eager and enthusiastic force will be able to execute an operation successfully. A commander must understand his target group and realize the required approach to motivate them. He must comprehend the circumstances they find themselves in and be able to "sell" the desired outcome of the operation as being to their advantage.

5.5.6 Tracking progress towards obtainment of objectives

Tracking progress during the execution of an operation is most successful by means of control measures. A control schedule depicts critical outcomes that must be achieved to ensure overall operational success. This "event list" allow subordinate commanders to report certain outcomes to the commander as they are reached or obtained. In military terms these events are referred to as Decisive Points and they allow the commander to

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

monitor the critical path in terms of the execution. Outcomes have to be validated, because follow-on actions are launched *from* a firm base *to* a firm base.

Control measures must also be simplified, as a commander cannot check every task his subordinates are busy with in detail. The lower the task is executed in an organisation, the more detailed the execution plan must be. Thus, the shorter the intervals for reporting of progress.

5.5.7 How Simplicity as military principle assists lower level commanders to manage change during execution

Change is necessitated by a variety of factors, but contingency plans provide the basis for change management. The new situation has to be contemplated in order to determine which contingency is applicable and must be applied. Then the contingency must be refined in order to address the new set of requirements. This allows the commander to remain fixed on achieving his original objective, or if required, the follow-on objective.

Objectives should rarely change in execution. Change relates to the “Ways” in execution and focuses on achieving an objective despite a previous unsuccessful effort.

5.5.8 Strategy execution with capabilities and limitations of the force considered

Feasibility tests, before execution, must be done to ensure that capabilities and limitations are appreciated. This will determine whether a task is still executable and if the objective can still be achieved. The results of these risk assessments must be shared with all involved

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

down the chain of command. The execution plans must be appreciated taking capabilities, limitations and risks into account.

Risks, in terms of capabilities and limitations, must be mitigated by means of creative approaches that focus own strengths against the opposing force's weaknesses. It is wise, as a commander, to put all facts on the table when confronted with these circumstances.

Buy-in from all levels is necessary to ensure Unity of Effort. This is only possible when the creative energy and the will to succeed from the team as a whole can be tapped into.

Commanders must have the "moral guts" to confront their superiors in cases where objective achievement is not possible.

If a command is given, a commander must ensure that all the POTEDFITB elements have been considered and have been communicated to the responsible commander for execution.

5.5.9 Maintain focus on objectives during execution

- Select the right person for the right objective. Some people are just not capable of remaining focus, so it is imperative that the commander knows his/her subordinates and their abilities. The commander should be familiar with what drives each of them as this will allow him to select the person most likely to ensure the success in the execution of a task.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

- Create an environment where accountability is of utmost importance. A successful force has commanders that understand that they must delegate tasks in order to survive.
- Constantly supervise and guide subordinates. A good commander knows what his subordinate commanders are occupied with. The subordinates, in turn, understand what is expected of them to focus on the commander's required outcomes. A good commander knows that the positive outcome on any objective must be rewarded. An environment must be created where the path towards an objective (tasks and activities) is not regarded as a measure of success, but rather as the attainment of the objective.
- Outcomes must be clearly defined and the desired End-State must be formulated as specifically and clearly as possible.
- Subordinate commanders can only remain focussed on specific objectives if the higher level of command is completely focussed on it. This implies that one will have to "walk the talk" with subordinate commanders.

6 CHAPTER 6 - DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this research was to identify a theoretical approach, which originates from the military, to assist geographically dispersed organisations to improve strategy execution by reviewing and applying a principle of war, namely Simplicity, to strategy execution on the operational and tactical level.

This chapter analyses the results from the survey and interviews conducted within the Host Company and from the military personnel interviewed. Phases 3 and 4 of the research methodology, as described in Chapter 4 will be executed in this chapter, namely:

- Phase 3: The matching of successful military approaches to Simplicity with the main identified drivers of ineffective strategy execution in a geographical dispersed organisation.
- Phase 4: The compilation of a specific model and tools of simplification as a suggested application tool in a geographical dispersed organisation.

From this the Research Question (stated in Chapter 3) and the Study Objectives (stated in Chapter 4) the following questions will be answered, namely:

- Research Question: How can the application of Simplicity as a principle of war, and its employment in military terms, be applied to a geographically dispersed organisation and improve strategy execution in the organisation?

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

- Objective 1: Determine the underlying causes of ineffectiveness in strategy execution in a geographically dispersed organisation.
- Objective 2: Determine how Simplicity improves strategy execution in military organisations on the operational level.
- Objective 3: Determine how the simplification of strategic objectives by means of the definition and tracking of short term goals can improve strategy execution in a geographically dispersed organisation.
- Objective 4: Determine and define specific military approaches to strategy execution that can improve strategy execution in a geographically dispersed organisation.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

To assist in comparing a military organisation with the Host Company, the following figure was developed (Figure 6-1):

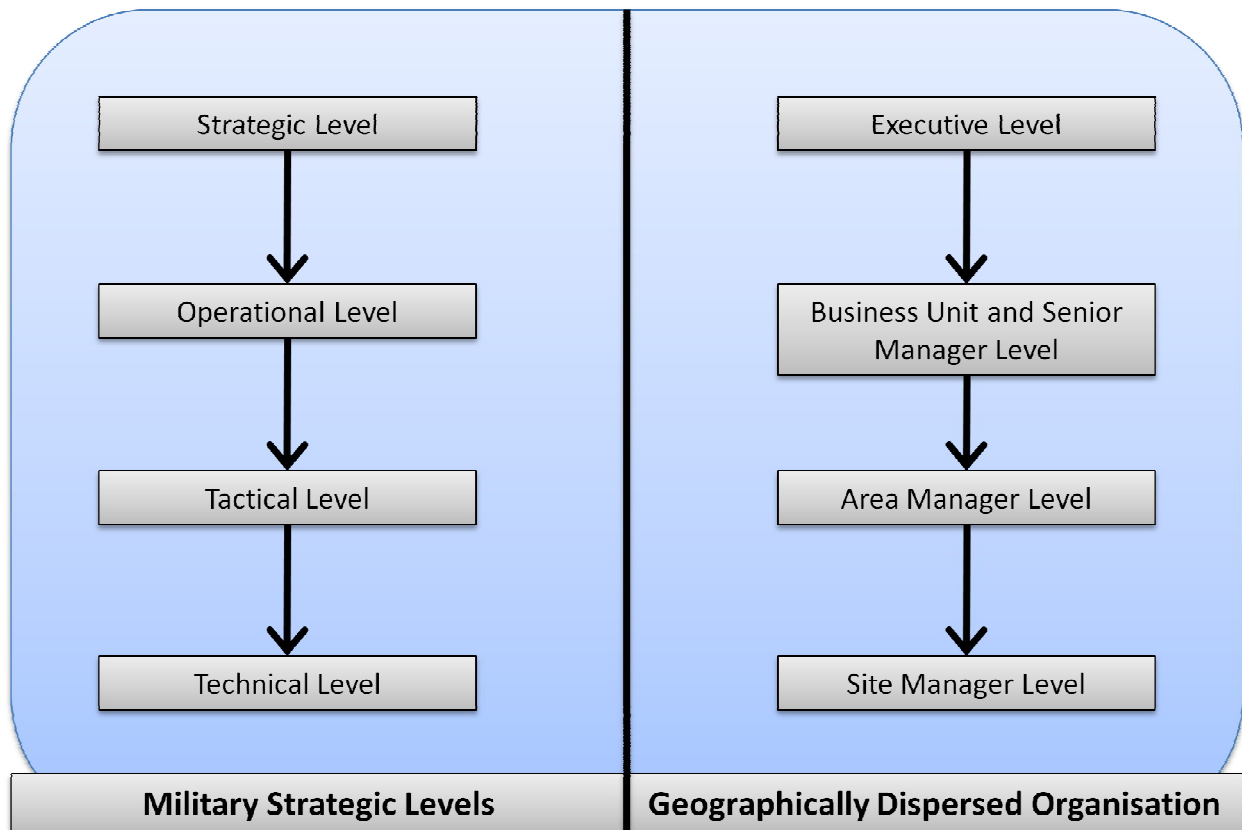


Figure 6-1 Comparison between military and geographical dispersed organisations

The strategic level of the SA Army, as described in Chapter 5, can be compared to the Exco Level of the Host Company. The operational level can be compared to the business unit and senior manager level. The tactical level can be compared to the area manager level and the technical level to the site manager level. This comparison allows for the functions of each level in strategy execution to be evaluated.

6.2 Strategic Level Functioning in Strategy Execution

The attainment of strategic objectives in the Host Company must remain the responsibility of the Managing Director (MD) and his executive committee. In this regard, Raps (2004) indicated that a strategy must not only define an organisation's direction, but is also the simplified definition of top management's long term responsibilities.

This team receives guidelines and high level strategic objectives from the holding company Exco and must define them to apply in the organisation. Kaplan & Norton (2001) stated that the strategy must be understood by everyone involved in and responsible for strategy delivery.

Strategic long term objectives are defined, considering the POSTEDFITB model and communicated with the operational level of the organisation. The Exco must ensure that the means (resources) to execute are available to the operational level, in appreciating the strategic objectives.

The Exco contract with the operational level on the delivery of the stated objectives, according to the POSTEDFITB elements, and this interaction ensures that these objectives are communicated 2 levels down in conjunction with the operational level staff. This communication must be focussed on clearly describing the desired strategic objectives to this level. The single aim of this communication must be to describe and clarify the MD's intent for the year to the operational and tactical level. Paterson (2010) confirmed that effective communication in strategy execution gives subordinate managers a clear

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

understanding of what is expected from them, how their outputs will be measured and how they will be held accountable for their required deliverables, compared to the goals set for them in the execution of the strategy.

The main characteristic required to develop the capabilities to achieve strategic objectives applicable to the Strategic level is motivation. The Exco must ensure that the personnel two levels down remain motivated by ensuring that these levels:

- Are empowered with the means to deliver on strategic objectives;
- Understand these objectives and the MD's intent;
- Buy-in and commitment to these objectives because they understand the true value and advantages of obtaining these objectives.

Formal and standardised progress from the operational level must be reviewed on a quarterly basis. This feedback should confirm that the required End-State is still clear and specific and understood at operational level. The feedback should include:

- Confirmation that operational plans are still in line with the strategic objectives stated;
- Measureable progress reporting on each objective;
- Verification on resources and capabilities and the application thereof in accordance with initial allocation;
- Deviations and additional capabilities requests;
- Contingency plans, if applicable.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

The Exco must also ensure that the current execution environment where accountability for delivery is critical is established and maintained. Kipp (1999) also reiterated that management must ensure that an organisation remains competitive in relation to a continuous changing business environment.

The last responsibility of the Exco in execution is to continuously scan and review companywide and business-unit-specific opportunities in the external environment. This aims to:

- Define contingency plans for changes in the environment;
- Communicate these impacts timeously to the operational level;
- Define and develop strategic objectives for the next period.

In this respect, Gay & D'Aprix (2007) reiterated that external barriers can greatly influence the future attainment of strategic objectives.

6.3 Operational Level Functioning in Strategy Execution

The business unit management teams are responsible for translating strategic objectives into understandable concepts for each specific business unit and the area management levels. This management level must also ensure the Means to execute are available 2 levels down (on tactical and technical level). The operational level managers must continuously ensure that the Area management level reporting to them understand and function within the boundaries of the long term strategic goals and that the MD's intent is understood clearly and without uncertainty throughout the execution period. Strategic long term

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

objectives are received and defined into shorter term goals, considering the POSTEDFITB model and communicated with the tactical level of the organisation. Hrebiniak & Joyce (1986) identified the translation of long term strategic objectives into specific short term objectives as a critical requirement of the process of successful strategy execution. Short term objectives reduce uncertainty, complexity, and limitations to successful strategy execution (Hrebiniak & Joyce, 1986).

The operational management level must be responsible for delivery on defined quarterly goals, which are in turn defined and quantified out of the strategic goals. For this to become a workable reality, progress on the delivery of goals must be measured and reviewed on a monthly basis. This reporting must be milestone and issue driven. Subordinate managers must report on the status of delivery of these goals and point out issues that affect or impede the delivery of these goals. It is the responsibility of the operational management level to then review resource allocations and to re-align the quarterly goals to the strategic objectives. Thus the Means to achieving the stated End-State is evaluated and the re-allocation of resources is made to facilitate the achievement of the long term objectives, considering the real-time progress on shorter term goals.

Another key function required at the operational level is to continuously mirror and review the capabilities and limitations within the business units against the desired strategic objectives, as received from the strategic level. Kaplan and Norton (2001) stated that managers in an organisation must review the strategy, the attainment of its objectives and

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

the status of execution more regularly. This allows management to monitor organisational performance against short term targets.

The application of Mission Command, as described in Chapter 5, will greatly assist in the lower level management functioning more effectively on attaining defined goals. Operational level managers must empower the subordinate managers responsible for delivery on quarterly goals. This implies ensuring that the focus of the subordinates remains on quarterly goals given, while tactical level managers still have the freedom of action to execute tasks according to their plan formulated to attain these goals. Operational managers must guarantee that the common “picture” of the desired outcomes within the business unit remains in place.

Operational level management must also develop the capabilities and knowledge of the tactical level managers within a structured format, to ensure that these subordinate managers have the required capabilities and skills set to execute their tasks. This refers to the enablement of the subordinate managers in terms of the stated capabilities that must be developed to ensure continuous delivery on defined goals. Eicher (2002) stated that middle management and their subordinates need to be empowered to successfully execute operational plans aligned with strategic objectives.

Another critical function at this level is to synchronise activities between areas. This will ensure that different Area managers are aware of activities conducted in other areas and that duplication of effort does not occur. This will also greatly enhance the sharing and

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

dissemination of intelligence between areas. Jensen (1997) stated that actions in execution must be synchronised to meet the company's strategic objectives at a lower level.

6.4 Tactical Level Functioning in Strategy Execution

Tactical level management must understand the intent of management 2 levels up, which is the MD's intent. By applying the POSTEDFITB model, short term goals must be defined as they are received from the operational level and broken down further into specific short term goals that are then contracted with managers on the technical level. The area managers are responsible for delivery of the goals on a monthly basis. These goals are target driven and quantified in terms of actual output compared to monthly targets. Kaplan & Norton (2008) stated that a requirement for the successful alignment of strategy and operations is the tracking of performance through quantified and graphic displays of progress against defined goals.

Area managers must take ownership of ensuring the preparedness of personnel at the technical level. This includes planning for the required training and development of personnel. Gay & D'Aprix (2007) stated that companies must ensure that there is "Line of Sight" between lower management and the organisation's strategic objectives, through lower management's commitment and ownership of the strategy and operational execution plans.

Tactical level managers must be the "masters" of technical aspects in their responsible areas. They must understand the functions and activities conducted on sites, thus ensuring

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

the “Means” to execution are focussed and effectively applied. With this, an area manager must understand the uniqueness of each site that resides under him. He must physically be “on the ground” and so coordinate and understand the complexities of each site. This will also contribute to his understanding of the challenges, uncertainties and development priorities that exists on each site and also to identify opportunities and commonalities that exists between sites.

The area manager must manage progress on short term objectives with the technical level on weekly interviews. Targets must be negotiated and contracted with the site managers and the site manager must develop and execute the plan to attain these targets. Through this process the main responsibility of the area manager is to constantly supervise and guide subordinate managers in the execution of tasks to obtain short term objectives.

6.5 Technical Level Functioning in Strategy Execution

The technical level managers (site managers) must have a daily focus on operational delivery of targets. Technical level managers must understand the intent from the operational level, as defined to him, in conjunction with the area managers and translate the short term goals into operational functions on site.

Site managers must ensure the availability and utilisation of equipment and personnel on site are synchronised towards the stated targets and that these resources are optimally applied.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

Continuous delivery on targets can also only occur with disciplined and focussed application of resources on site. The site managers are the main role players in ensuring the attainment of these objectives.

Goals and targets must be communicated as simply as possible to subordinates. This communication must occur daily and in such a manner that:

- No uncertainty exists over what is required as the target;
- What means must be applied to obtain the target;
- Who is responsible for delivery on the target;
- How the attainment of the target contributes to the short term goals of the site.

To ensure the realisation of the abovementioned requirements, the site manager must control daily operations by means of event lists and target attainment graphs, indicating daily progress towards short term goals.

6.6 Comparison of Host Company Strategy Inhibitors to Military Approaches to Simplicity

From a military perspective, the focussed and deliberate identification and application of the Ends, Ways and Means available to a commander are critical to the execution of a strategy (Tom & Barrons, 2006).

In this respect, a comparison of the main inhibitors to successful strategy execution in a geographically dispersed organisation are compared to the application of Simplicity as a

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

military principle, allowing for the following recommendations, captured under the identified requirements for successful strategy execution, as determined in this research:

6.6.1 Requirement 1: Clear and simplified short term measureable plans aligned with the organisations long term strategic objectives.

No.	Strategy execution inhibitors in Host Company	Military approaches to Simplicity to address inhibitors
1	Uncertainty and inconsistency in the understanding of the company strategy at all management levels	The required End-State (Ends), methods to execution (Ways) and resources available to execute (Means) must be clear to managers at all levels. These requirements must be translated into understandable context for every target management level concerned in the execution of the strategy. Managers at all levels must understand the intent of higher management 2 levels up. This assists in fixing a framework of operation within the strategic intent of the organisation. With this, management must plan execution of short term activities with lower managers, preferably 2 levels down.
2	Complexity in the communication of strategic objectives downwards, as managers do not totally understand the required End-State	
3	Strategic plans are unclear, and difficult to understand at lower levels	
4	The whole strategy is not communicated, only parts applicable to certain disciplines and departments	

Table 6-1 Successful Execution Requirement 1, organisation inhibitors and military applications

6.6.2 Requirement 2: Effective and simplified change management capabilities to adapt to influencing factors internally and externally.

No.	Strategy execution inhibitors in Host Company	Military approaches to Simplicity to address inhibitors
1	The current strategy execution abilities are not adaptive to change	Mission Command must be applied throughout the company. This translates into the fact that responsibility and accountability must be focussed at the level of management where decisions are made during execution.
2	The ability to manage change in the company is too slow and reactive	

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

No.	Strategy execution inhibitors in Host Company	Military approaches to Simplicity to address inhibitors
3	The understanding and interpretation of objectives are not always clear	<p>To facilitate effective change management, senior management must ensure that lower management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the strategic intent of the organisation; • Are equipped and empowered to execute tasks aligned with strategic objectives; • Understands the parameters (framework) in which execution is required. <p>Senior management must translate a “single aim” focus throughout the company by ensuring strategic and operational plans are as simplistic as possible. This negates the threats of uncertainty, confusion and conflicting messages.</p> <p>Senior management must not inhibit freedom of action to execute, but must ensure the End-State is clear and means to execute are available. The method (Ways) of execution must be defined and implemented by the responsible manager.</p>
4	The systems in the company are not dynamic enough to effectively manage change	

Table 6-2 Successful Execution Requirement 2, organisation inhibitors and military applications

6.6.3 Requirement 3: Employee empowerment with clear responsibilities and accountabilities during execution to ensure clarity on required goals, the desired outcome, expectations and subsequent rewards.

Nr	Strategy execution inhibitors in Host Company	Military approaches to Simplicity to address inhibitors
1	Defined criteria for strategic success are not always given	<p>Senior management must ensure that managers at all levels are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabled to execute their responsibilities; • Prepared for the level of execution that is expected from them; • Motivated to contribute to the success of the organisation. <p>To facilitate these requirements, the POSTEDFITB model (as discussed in chapter 5) can be applied to mobilise managers 1 level lower, by ensuring</p>
2	Not all operational managers are linked to operational performance rewards	
3	Rewards are linked to profitability, safety and cash flow management, not strategy delivery	
4	Strategic plans are unclear and not easily understood by all	

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

Nr	Strategy execution inhibitors in Host Company	Military approaches to Simplicity to address inhibitors
	managers	<p>absolute clarity and focus on short term deliverables aligned with the long term organisational strategic objectives.</p> <p>Clarity on expectation and performance review criteria must also be captured and agreed upon using this model, as a discussion between the superior and responsible manager.</p>

Table 6-3 Successful Execution Requirement 3, organisation inhibitors and military applications

6.6.4 Requirement 4: The organisation, its structure and functioning is aligned with short term goals and long term objectives as required.

No.	Strategy execution inhibitors in Host Company	Military approaches to Simplicity to address inhibitors
1	Minimum consultation in short term goal establishment	The successful application of Mission Command will ensure that senior management defines the desired End-state in an understandable and applicable format to the desired level where execution is required. With this, senior management must also ensure that the required means are available and in place to compliment successful delivery on strategic objectives.
2	Inconsistencies in the consideration of limitations and capabilities in the distribution of work	
3	Capabilities and tools are not always made available to execute work effectively	

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

No.	Strategy execution inhibitors in Host Company	Military approaches to Simplicity to address inhibitors
4	Head Office is sometimes considered a bottleneck in service delivery	<p>Head office management must ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The best personnel are appointed in positions responsible for strategy delivery; • The Means (resources and personnel) are available to lower management to execute effectively; • Lower management has the desired freedom of action to execute plans effectively. <p>This implies trust in the capabilities and empowerment of lower managers to execute tasks of a short term nature that contribute to the attainment of organisational strategic objectives.</p> <p>With this, senior management must always be responsible for the development of lower management knowledge and abilities, at least 1 level down.</p>

Table 6-4 Successful Execution Requirement 4, organisation inhibitors and military applications

7 CHAPTER 7 - CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

The conclusions drawn from this research will be discussed in 3 sections, namely:

- A summary of the entire study;
- Recommendations based on the results obtained in the research;
- Possible recommendations for future studies on the subject.

7.2 Summary

The inability in any level of an organisation to deliver on strategic objectives can significantly contribute to the underperformance of that organisation. Managers at all levels within the organisation must take responsibility for and affect the required results they are capable of, in order to realise strategic objectives.

This research paper attempted to answer the following problem: "How can the application of Simplicity as a principle of war, and its employment in military terms, be applied to a geographically dispersed organisation and improve strategy execution in the organisation?"

The methodology used was a case study approach where:

- Simplicity as a military principle was evaluated as a strategy execution tool;
- The current strategy execution abilities in a geographically dispersed were defined in terms of effectiveness and shortcomings;

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

- A recommended approach to strategy execution was proposed, after reviewing military approaches, to be applied in the geographically dispersed organisation.

The main objectives of this study were to:

- Determine the underlying causes of ineffectiveness in strategy execution in a geographically dispersed organisation;
- Determine how Simplicity improves strategy execution in military organisations on the operational level.
- Determine how the simplification of strategic objectives by means of the definition and tracking of short term goals can improve strategy execution in a geographically dispersed organisation.
- Determine and define specific military approaches to strategy execution that can improve strategy execution in a geographically dispersed organisation.

The research was conducted in 4 distinct phases, namely:

- Phase 1: Investigation into the main reasons and indicators as to why strategy execution is not fully effective in an identified geographical dispersed organisation. The audience for this phase were managers at all levels in a geographically dispersed organisation. A survey was distributed to 228 managers and 52 returns were received. 5 semi-structured interviews were also conducted (1 senior manager, 2 middle managers and 2 lower managers). The output of this phase was the

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

identification of shortcomings and inhibitors of effective strategy execution in the specific geographically dispersed organisation.

- Phase 2: Review of the application of Simplicity in the military context. The audience for this phase was serving military general staff in the SA Army with specific expertise and experience in the execution of operations and tactical plans in the military domain. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 1 Major General and 2 Brigadier Generals. The aim was to investigate military approaches to Simplicity and the impact on military operational execution. The output of this phase was the capturing of defined inputs and specific tools and approaches to Simplicity during the execution of military operations.
- Phase 3: The matching of successful military approaches to Simplicity with the main identified drivers of ineffective strategy execution in a geographical dispersed organisation. The method applied was a conceptual content analysis to identify specific shortcomings in the execution of strategy in the organisation and match these with specific military approaches to Simplicity to negate the cause. The output was listed as strategy execution inhibitors in the geographically dispersed organisation, with matched approaches to Simplicity from interviews with military professionals.
- Phase 4: The compilation of a specific model and tools of simplification as a suggested application tool in a geographical dispersed organisation. The method applied included the review of inhibitors to successful strategy execution in the geographically dispersed organisation and the proposition of a model, based on the

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

military principles of Simplicity. The output was a model for strategy execution with tools and techniques to ensure the simplification of strategic objectives in execution.

7.3 Recommendations

In summary, the following concepts and applications, derived from Simplicity as a military principle, can improve strategy execution in a geographically dispersed organisation:

- The definition and clarification of long, medium objectives into short term goals by:
 - ENDS - Clearly defining and communicating desired End-States at applicable organisational levels;
 - MEANS - Allocating required resources to deliver on required ends;
 - WAYS - Empowering lower level managers to execute their plans with the required freedom of action, within a controlled progress tracking structure.
- The review and tracking of progress through a structured and standardised feedback structure, where time intervals are aligned with the level of execution and the complexity of the executed tasks. This must also allow for effective contingency management to address change management and re-allocation of resources requirements.
- Clear and understandable communication of identified strategic objectives to appropriate levels by superior managers, according to the POSTEDFITB breakdown:
 - P - Personnel. The personnel available to the subordinate manager to attain the desired End-State, defined as individuals and strength (quantities).

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

- O - Organisation. The composition of the structure of personnel available.
- S - Sustainment. The support and maintenance capabilities available to the subordinate manager during execution.
- T - Training. The required skills and qualification that will be required or that must be developed to attain the desired End-State.
- E - Equipment. The equipment allocated to the subordinate manager for the duration of execution.
- D - Doctrine. The policies and procedures that must be adhered to during execution.
- F - Facilities. Infrastructure and facilities available during execution
- I - Information. Information and data that the subordinate manager will require during planning and execution to assist him.
- T - Technology. Specific technological capabilities that will be available to the subordinate manager during planning and execution.
- B - Budget. The financial means available to the subordinate manager for execution is stipulated, to assist him in planning.
- Linking responsibility, accountability and performance measurement criteria with desired outcomes, as an interactive function between the superior manager and the responsible lower level management.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

7.4 Recommended Future Studies

Following the completion of this research paper and the implementation of a model of Simplicity in the given geographical dispersed organisation, the next study would be a review of the increase in effectiveness of strategy execution in the identified geographical dispersed organisation, to assess whether:

- The model of simplification can be implemented successfully;
- The model of simplification can contribute to more effective strategy execution practices in the organisation;
- The model of simplification enhanced the understanding and commitment to strategic objectives within the organisation.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

REFERENCES

- Abbot, M., Fisher, M., Keeven, T. & Fortuna, K. (2008). Principles of War as Applied to Business Leadership [Internet]. Available from: <http://akfpartners.com/techblog/2008/12/31/principles-of-war-as-applied-to-business-leadership-%E2%80%93-part-2/> (accessed 14 June 2010).
- Babbie, E. & Mouton, J. (2003). *The Practice of Social Research – South African Edition*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Clemons, E. K. & Santamaria, J. A. (2002). Manoeuvre Warfare: Can Modern Military Strategy Lead You to Victory? *Harvard Business Review*. April 2002.
- David, F. R. (1997). *Concepts of Strategic Management*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- de Bono, E. (1998). *Simplicity*. London: Penguin.
- Donovan, R. M. (2009). Connecting Business Strategy and Operations [Internet]. *Reliable Plant*. Available from: <http://www.reliableplant.com/Read/130/business-strategy-operations> (accessed 23 April 2010).
- Eicher, J. P. (2006). Making Strategy Happen. *Performance Management*. 45 (10), 31-48.
- Etling, J. R. (1985). *The Super-Strategist*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Evans, C. & Richardson, M. (2008). Strategy in Action: Making It Happen. *The British Journal of Administrative Management*. July 2008, i-iii.
- Frigo, M. L. (2003). Strategy or execution. *Strategic Finance*. 84 (9), 9-10.
- Gay, C. & D'Aprix, R. (2007). Creating Line of Sight between Employees and Strategy. *Strategic Communication Management*. 11 (1), 26-29.
- Horwath, R. (2006). The Origin of Strategy [Internet]. *Strategic Thinking Institute*. Available from: http://www.strategyskills.com/Articles_Samples/origin_strategy.pdf (accessed 14 June 2010).
- Hrebiniak, L. G. & Joyce, W. F. (1986). The Strategic Importance of Managing Myopia. *Sloan Management Review*. 28 (1), 5-14.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

Hrebiniak, L. G. (2004). Making Strategy Work: Chapter 1 - Strategy Execution is the Key [Internet]. Available from: http://ptgmedia.pearsoncmg.com/images/013146745X/samplechapter/hrebiniak_ch01.pdf (accessed 14 June 2010).

Hrebiniak, L. G., (2006). Obstacles to Effective Strategy Implementation [Internet]. Available from: <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.innopac.up.ac.za/login.aspx?direct=true&db=buh&AN=19605513&site=e-ehost-live&scope=site> (accessed 25 June 2010).

Hrebiniak, L. G. (2008). Making Strategy Work: Overcoming the Obstacles to Effective Execution [Internet]. *Ivey Business Journal Online*, 72(2). Available from <http://0-proquest.umi.com.innopac.up.ac.za/pqdweb?index=1&did=1484523021&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=3&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1267425878&clientId=15443> (accessed 23 April 2010).

Jensen, B. (1997). Make it Simple: How simplicity could become your ultimate strategy. *Strategy and Leadership*, 25 (2).

Johnsen, W. T., Johnson, D. V., Kievit, J. O., Lovelace, D. C. & Metz, S. (1995). The Principles of War in the 21st Century: Strategic Considerations [Internet]. Available from: <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/ssi/pow21.pdf> (accessed 14 June 2010).

Jones, G. R. & Hill, C. W. L. (2009). *Strategic Management Essentials 2nd Edition*. United States of America: Cengage Learning.

Jones, R. (1996). *Elements of Military Strategy*. Westport: Praeger Publishers.

Kaplan, R. S. & Norton, D. P. (2001). Building a Strategy-focused Organization. *Ivey Business Journal*. May/June 2001, 13-19.

Kaplan, R. S. & Norton, D. P. (2008). *Linking Strategy to Operations for Competitive Advantage*. Harvard Business Press.

Khadem, R. (2008). Alignment and follow-up: steps to strategy execution. *Journal of Business Strategy*. 29 (6), 29-35.

Kipp, M. F. (1999). The Challenges of Strategy: Seven Lessons. *Strategy & Leadership*. 27 (1), 32-33.

Li, Y., Guohui, S. & Eppler, M. J. (2008). Making Strategy Work: A Literature Review on the Factors influencing Strategy Implementation. *Institute for Corporate Communication*. University of Lugano, Switzerland.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

Maude, F. N. & Graham, J. J. (1997). *Carl von Clausewitz: On War*. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth.

Moore, R. (2008). Why Leaders Fail: When the best strategies can't get it done [Internet]. *Cost Engineering*, 50 (11). Available from: <http://0-proquest.umi.com.innopac.up.ac.za/pqdweb?index=1&did=1615429221&SrchMode=1&sid=4&Fmt=3&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1267432194&clientId=15443> (accessed 23 April 2010).

Neilson, G. L., Martin, K. L. & Powers, E. (2008). The Secrets to Successful Strategy Execution. *Harvard Business Review*. June 2008.

Paterson, K. (2010). Rallying the Troops. *Rough Notes*. 153 (2), 76-78.

Pearce, J. A. & Robinson, R. B. (2005). *Strategic Management: Formulation, Implementation, and Control 9th Edition*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Pleshko, L. & Nickerson, I. (2008). Strategic Orientation, Organizational Structure and the Associated Effects on Performance in Industrial Firms. *Academy of Strategic Management Journal*. Volume 7.

Raps, A. (2004). Implementing Strategy. *Strategic Finance*. 85 (12), 48-53.

Seitz, S., Oakeley, K. M. & Garcia-Huidobro, F. (2002). Operation Overlord and the Principles of War [Internet]. Available from: <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf&AD=ADA421635> (accessed 14 June 2010).

Tom, D. & Barrons, R. (2006). *The Business General: Transform your business using seven secrets of military success*. London: Ebury Publishing.

Tustin, D. H., Lighelm, A. A., Martins, J. H. & van Wyk, H. De J. (2005). *Marketing Research in Practice*. Pretoria: ABC Press.

US Army Field Manual, Section 2. Introduction to the Principles of War and Operations [Internet]. *University of Cincinnati*. Available from: http://www.uc.edu/armyrotc/ms2text/msl_201_102b_intro_to_principles_of_war_and_operations.pdf (accessed 14 June 2010).

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case Study Research – Design and Methods 3rd Edition*. California: Sage Publications, Inc.

Zikmund, W. G. (2003). *Business Research Methods*. Mason: South-Western.

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Example of Survey Questionnaire

1	How long have you been an employee of the company?	
		0-2 years
		2-5 years
		5-10 years
		More than 10 years
2	How many employees of the organisation report directly to you?	
		0-10
		11-20
		21-50
		More than 50
3	Do you understand the strategic objectives of your organisation?	
		Yes
		No
		Uncertain
4	Have the organisation's strategic objectives have been formally communicated to you?	
		Yes
		No
		Uncertain

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

5	In your opinion, do you contribute to the attainment of the strategic objectives in the execution of your daily tasks?	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Uncertain
6	Does your organisation consider your capabilities and limitations when setting goals for you / your section?	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Uncertain
7	Does your organisation apply any methods or approaches to reduce the uncertainty and complexity associated with strategic plan execution requirements?	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Uncertain
8	Are rewards in your organisation aligned with the attainment of predefined and communicated goals on a yearly basis?	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Uncertain

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

9	Are rewards in your organisation aligned with the attainment of predefined and communicated goals on a shorter term than a yearly basis?	
		Yes
		No
		Uncertain
10	Do you consider the strategic plans of your organisation to be easily understandable?	
		Yes
		No
		Uncertain
11	Do you consider the strategic objectives of your organisation to clearly state the intent of the Executive Committee (Exco). Are the objectives indicative of the direction the organisation are attempting to head into?	
		Yes
		No
		Uncertain
12	Are operational requirements in your organisation complementary to the strategy?	
		Yes
		No
		Uncertain

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

13	Are all departments in your organisation committed to the strategy of the organisation in execution?
	Yes
	No
	Uncertain
14	Do your responsibilities in the organisation contribute directly to achieving strategic objectives?
	Yes
	No
	Uncertain
15	Are strategic objectives translated into understandable operational target for you to achieve?
	Yes
	No
	Uncertain
16	Do your tactical actions plans (the way you work) contribute directly to the attainment of your organisation's strategic objectives?
	Yes
	No
	Uncertain
17	How is the change in environment or client requirements managed during operational execution in your organisation?
	Effectively (done timeously, in a structured and controlled manner)
	Ineffectively (the change is slow and uncontrolled)
	Uncertain

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

18	Do operational managers in your organisation take ownership (responsibility) for the achievement of strategic objectives?	
		Yes
		No
		Uncertain
19	Are resources and time frames effectively managed in your organisation, according to the strategy?	
		Yes
		No
		Uncertain

Converting Simplicity as a Military Strategy Principle to a successful tool for Strategy Execution in a geographically dispersed organisation

George Barrie - 29589292

Appendix B – Guiding Questions for Open-Ended Interviews: Host Company

QUESTIONS TO MANAGEMENT OF THE GEOGRAPHICALLY DISPERSED ORGANISATION:

1. Who is responsible for strategy execution in your organisation?
2. Who is responsible for communicating strategic objectives to responsible levels?
3. Is there a common focus in your organisation on attaining strategic objectives?
4. How are the strategic objectives communicated to all responsible levels?
5. How is progress towards reaching strategic objectives tracked within your organisation?
6. Are strategic objectives quantified in shorter term deliverables to lower levels?
7. Does your organisation consider the capabilities and limitations of resources in defining and communicating required objectives?
8. Is the understanding of strategic objectives the same at all levels of management within your organisation?

Appendix C – Guiding Questions for Open-Ended Interviews: SANDF Generals

QUESTIONS TO MILITARY PROFESSIONAL DURING INTERVIEW FOR RESEARCH PAPER:

1. What are the main internal obstacles to the successful execution of an operation in your experience?
2. How does the application of simplification assist in overcoming these obstacles?
3. How far down in the structure of the deployed force must objectives be understood and how do commanders ensure it is understood to this level?
4. What are the main characteristics of a deployed force that ensures it successfully attains the commander's objectives?
5. How is progress towards the attainment of the objective tracked within a deployed force?
6. Does a simplified plan and objectives to lower levels assist in the management of change during execution? How does it contribute?
7. How do commanders ensure that operations are executed with the capabilities and limitations of the organisation considered?
8. How do commanders ensure that subordinate commanders maintain focus on objectives during operational execution?