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Strategic Audits: A Necessity for Transforming Businesses

Parbatee Chang
CreateSpace
Unknown $0.00 (pp)
978-1-4538-0468-1

As companies slowly emerge from what undoubtedly has been a very challenging business climate, they may be rethinking their products or services, their market, and even the way they operate. In fact, according to Parbatee Chang, many companies "are being compelled to go through a period of structural adjustment."

Such fundamental change, writes the author of *Strategic Audits: A Necessity for Transforming Businesses*, means a company may need to "remove non-value adding activities, re-organize others, and include value-added activities, all in an effort to improve the services and products which are being offered." The strategic audit, says Chang, is a "mechanism for identifying the root causes of problems, so that solutions and, more importantly, preventive actions can be taken to ensure that situations do not arise that will cause harm to employees or the organization as a whole."

In a carefully structured, pragmatic way, Chang offers an introduction to strategic audits, details methodologies for conducting the strategic audit, lays out the vision mission and objectives, and addresses a company's existing strategies. The author provides an overview of how to review a company's general management system and other key processes, including employee training, performance appraisal, design and production of products and services, centralization or decentralization, new technology, marketing and promotions, and financial analysis. Chang also talks about organizational culture, customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and financial management, all in the context of the strategic audit.

In the final section of the book, the author provides a "menu for organizational transformation," which includes several strategic audit worksheets, keyed to the chapters in the book. Each worksheet is divided into four useful sections: Process Point, Summarized Result, Life Cycle Phase, and Recommendation for Transformation. Life Cycle Phase is further broken down into four stages: Embryonic, Growth, Mature, and Declining.

Chang concludes with the recommendation that businesses compile and analyze the results of the strategic audit from the worksheets and then establish an "improvement team" tasked with the role of leading the transformation.

The author is careful to point out several times throughout her book that, while she is providing a general process designed to facilitate implementation of a strategic audit, each business is different, so each strategic audit will, of necessity, be unique to that business. Still, Chang provides a comprehensive plan for implementing strategic audits that can be adapted and put to good use.

Strategic Audits is a clearly written road map for implementing the strategic audit process. The worksheets provided by the author will be particularly valuable to any organization that undertakes a strategic audit. Managers of any size company should benefit from Chang's no-nonsense approach.

BARRY SILVERSTEIN (May 10, 2011)

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