

Listen to a Business Coach who has been giving a lecture about the importance of strategic thinking for a successful business. In this final part of his lecture he is summing up his ten essential requirements to becoming a great strategic thinker.

**Optional activity:**

Before you listen, read these three brief descriptions of the lecture extract. Then listen and choose the one that best summarises the lecture a, b or c.

- The speaker offered ten top tips for becoming a successful strategic thinker.
  - The speaker described the ten things that made him a successful strategic thinker.
  - The speaker gave ten pieces of advice for managers to train their staff to be successful strategic thinkers.
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Now I'd like to just quickly sum up the ten points that I've been speaking about on how to be a successful strategic thinker.

First of all you must have a vision. Without a vision you won't know where you want to go. This is fundamental. All the great strategic thinkers are also great visionaries. So this point is number one on my list.

Secondly, you have to learn from past experience. Learning never ends so you have to understand that you are a lifelong learner. Strive for continuous improvement and never stop the learning process.

Thirdly, it is essential that you learn to manage your time. Using time effectively and efficiently and being good on time management is a key issue.

Number four. Awareness. You have to be aware of everything that is happening around you. Sometimes in a business this is hard, but there are always clues. It's your job to spot them. This awareness of what's going on you will help to guide you in the right direction and show you where the opportunities and the challenges lie.

Next, another important word: Patience. You must be patient. Strategic thinking is long term. It is not about today or even next week. So patience is essential.

Number six. Ok, this links in with the last one really. If you are thinking long term – and you *should* be - then you need to identify goals and milestones along the way. And you shouldn't just define the milestones and then forget about them. No, you have to review them constantly. Things can crop up which put could potentially stop you from reaching your milestones. You need to spot them and do something about them.

The next point is about being open-minded. Keep your minds open all the time. Don't get caught in the trap of judging your ideas as you are thinking them up. First get your ideas and then wait until they are being tried and tested before you start judging them.

Number eight. It's essential that you are both realistic and honest in what you can achieve. If you are unrealistic then things will fall apart. Success is attainable if it is a success based on a realistic, honest prediction of what you can achieve. Great strategic-thinkers enjoy great achievements because their expectations weren't excessive.

Number nine. Take time out! This is crucial. You must make time for yourself. It doesn't matter what you do with this time. We've all got our ways of relaxing; a game of golf, a walk in the countryside, a visit to a spa. Some of the best strategic thinkers organise *thinking time!* Nobody can function well without relaxing too.

And finally, don't try to do everything on your own. Ask other people for their advice and opinions. You can do this in a semi-formal way by setting up peer advisory groups. Everybody benefits from bouncing ideas around. So, these are my top ten tips. I've spoken about each one at length and then summarised them briefly. If anybody would like to read more about .... [fade out]

**Answer key: a**