STRATEGIC THINKING DIAGNOSTIC

Test whether decisions reflect the needs of the whole business.

Completed by: Leader and direct manager separately	Recommended timing: When you want Leader to become more strategic
Date: ______________________________	Situation: ______________________________

PURPOSE

Use this diagnostic to examine whether the leader can move beyond a revenue-only lens and make choices that balance customers, capacity, margin, cash, talent, risk, and long-term value.

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I distinguish the customer request from the underlying customer need.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I define the real decision before debating solutions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I consider credible alternatives, including changing timing, scope, price, or sequence.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I identify the assumptions that must be true for a decision to work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I consider what other work, customers, or priorities may be displaced.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I understand the margin and cash implications of the opportunity.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I consider operational capacity and delivery risk before making commitments.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I anticipate second-order effects on people, systems, and customer trust.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I know when a decision is reversible and when it requires greater care.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I revisit important decisions when evidence changes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Score the assessment

Question or field	Your response
Total of all 10 ratings (possible range: 10-50)	0
Average score (total divided by 10)	0
Number of items rated 1 or 2	0
Lowest-rated strategic habit	
Decision where this weakness is most visible	

SCORING KEY 4.25-5.00 = consistently strong strategic judgment; 3.50-4.24 = sound thinking with identifiable blind spots; 2.75-3.49 = inconsistent use of tradeoffs and broader business evidence; 2.00-2.74 = decisions are too narrow, reactive, or function-centered; 1.00-1.99 = immediate decision-quality risk. Review individual items as well as the average—one weak habit can materially affect a high-stakes decision.

TURN THE SCORE INTO PRACTICE Choose one strategic habit and apply it to a real decision within the next two weeks. Ask a knowledgeable peer to challenge the assumptions, alternatives, operational implications, and second-order effects before the decision is finalized.

Apply the diagnostic to a real opportunity

Question or field	Your response
Decision to be made	
Customer need	
Options considered	
Decision criteria	
Capacity required	
Margin and financial impact	
Work or priorities that may be displaced	
Key assumptions	
Major risks	

Recommendation and rationale	
Decision owner	
Review trigger or date	

Turn the result into action

Question or field	Your response
Strategic habit to strengthen	
Where it will be practiced	
Who should challenge the leader’s thinking	
Evidence of improvement	

COMPLETION STANDARD D onot stop with insight. Leave with a clear behavior, an accountable owner, a date, and evidence that will show whether progress occurred.