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Models are more than something to look at. A functional model provides a framework to view the environment. During Practicum 1, I created a model that helped our consulting group work with our client. On the flight home, I thought more about this model and drafted a new version of it. A few weeks later, I decided to build on this model even more and started my own company based around the model. I was already in the process of starting my company before France, but this model helped me bring in the processes I needed to work with my clients more efficiently.

As I did additional reading around model creation and how some different types are used, I realized strategy is a buzzword that is thrown around a lot. I would often come across models masquerading as a strategy. I felt like this did a disservice to both pieces of the organizational puzzle.

A true consultant knows what a strategy is and what a strategy is not. Through the past few months, I’ve come back to what a real strategy is. To me, a strategy is a plan dictating how resources will be allocated in light of the overall goal and environment. Additionally, clear and communicated goals are essential for a strategy to be more than lip service. This is not a textbook definition, but it is the way that allows me to work with my clients in the most effective way presently.

Another insight is growth for growth’s sake is not a goal. There must be a purpose behind the desire to grow. When an organization and leader understands the deeper meaning that drives the organization, it changes the conversation and can put the organization into true alignment. Until a purpose is discovered, stated, and communicated, the organization has not tapped into the true potential it holds. Going through the process of bringing this out can be a challenge and hard to see a tangible impact on the bottom line. It is difficult to translate culture and motivation into the finances of the company. However, when they are not present, a company will fail to reach its full potential. This insight has helped me reshape my POV and mental model.

Most clients want the food but don’t want to be brought into the kitchen to see how everything was prepared. This has been a challenge for me. My default is to try and describe how I get to the result because I feel like my team and client want to understand it. Sometimes they do, but I offer the explanation before they ask about it. I spoke about this with a mentor of mine, and they used the analogy of giving someone food without forcing them into the kitchen. They want the entrée and the cook to worry about the rest. Realizing what my role is and how others perceive the role I’m playing in a setting is a continual journey for me. I’m aware of my default settings and am actively working on ways to be more concise or eliminate unneeded conversations that do not lead to progress towards the goal.

With each additional group project I am part of in this program, my POV shifts. I am starting to gain a deeper understanding that my skillset is not static or predefined. It is a bag of tools that require different usage depending on the project and other tools within the group. The primary objective is understanding how and when to use them.