

A Global Strategic Plan

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What would it take for us to succeed?

I've been asked that question many times. Regardless of who the "us" is, my answer is always the same. If you really want to succeed, you need a plan, a strategic plan.

And if the "us" is mankind, the answer is still the same, mankind needs a global strategic plan. More so today than ever before, because success today may mean survival tomorrow. So how would this look? Let's start with a SWOT. (A SWOT analysis is based on Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.)

We humans do have many Strengths. We have evolved into amazingly brilliant intellectual beings. We can handle extremely complex problems and have developed machines that can enhance our capabilities to accomplish extraordinary things. Through language and now computers, we can collaborate not only locally but globally. We have changed this planet from a spinning rock to a world capable of sustaining billions of people with incredible lifestyles. For the most part, we believe there is no problem that we can't solve.

On the other hand, we have many Weaknesses. Physically, we are a vulnerable and limited species. While the progress that we have made intellectually has allowed us to survive and thrive, it has taken a toll on the planet. It has also prevented us from evolving into a more resilient physical species. While we can adapt to gradual changes in the world, we don't do well with major catastrophes. And we have created immensely destructive war-fighting capabilities that could destroy the planet in a flash.

We believe our Opportunities are limitless. But are they? Looking outward to the universe, we are fascinated by the unbounded possibilities. We've toyed with space exploration, but tend to ignore the strategic possibilities of our own planet.

Because we have chosen to be fragmented, we only see selfish tactical opportunities. When we act on these, the results are at best sub-optimized, at worst destructive. There are definitely Threats. The more we grow, the more we know, the bigger the threats. In the beginning, the threats were local, and we eventually mastered those. When they became regional, we banded together to deal with them. When they became national, we went to war and barely escaped cataclysm. We assume that there will always be an earth and that somehow our cleverness will get us through. We deal with threats as problems, plugging holes in the dam until we run out of fingers.

A SWOT analysis is a reality check, it tells us where we are today and it can serve as the basis for where we want to head. A successful future should be one where our strengths overcome our weaknesses and our opportunities counter our threats. For example, our collaborative abilities can be used to overcome our self-centered weaknesses and provide an opportunity to deal creatively with our greatest threats. We know that collaboration has resulted in powerful innovations, so why not let Collaborative Innovation be our strategy for a successful future. With Collaborative Innovation as our global strategy, a new vision for the planet can emerge. Not one where we are overcome with natural and man-made threats, but a future for mankind where we deal with all of our issues as one global team.

As a start towards our new planetary vision, we could take on an issue that is globally threatening. How about Climate Change? By bringing the world's creative talents and problem-solving approaches to managing the challenges created by Climate Change, a universal threat could be removed and new opportunities for further Collaborative Innovation on other issues should become evident. Now there's a strategic plan for a successful global future.

Dr. Bart Barthelemy



Dr. Bart Barthelemy is the Founding Director of the Wright Brothers Institute and the Wright Brothers Institute's IDEA Lab. He has been a consultant to a variety of aerospace industry companies and federal government organizations, including Lockheed-Martin, Boeing, Ball, GRC, UTC, various Department of Defense organizations and the Air Force Research Laboratory. Bart has served as Visiting Scientist at the Software Engineering Institute of Carnegie Mellon University and Adjunct Professor at the University of Dayton. Bart was the National Director of the National Aerospace Plane Program where he was responsible for the technical development of the nation's hypersonic aerospace plane. Bart has also served as Technical Director of the Air Force Wright Aeronautical Laboratories at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, the Air Force's largest research and development complex. Bart's educational background includes a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering from MIT, Master of Science in Nuclear Engineering and Physics from MIT, and a Doctor of Philosophy in Nuclear Physics/Mechanical Engineering from The Ohio State University. Bart published *High Performance*, a book on high performance technology leadership in 1985, and *The Sky Is Not The Limit: Breakthrough Leadership*, St. Lucie Press, a book on breakthrough leadership in 1993

