

## How to Cheat on Your Strategic Plan (or “The Wimp’s Way Out”)



In our business, we see a lot of strategic plans. In too many of them we see this cute little two-step trick we call, “The Wimp’s Way Out”:

**Step one:** *First, declare bland, no fail, effort-based goals. If possible, make them sound aggressive without actually being aggressive.*

Here is an example from one military command’s plan:

“Using Lean Six Sigma process we will aggressively attack civilian employee lost productivity due to accidents and seek improvements to accident reporting and analysis.”

Gee, “aggressively,” eh? Wow.

**Step two:** *Then scavenge for precise outcomes a year later.* Somewhere between any organization’s random fluctuations and its random flailing, there is bound to be some good news you can claim as victory. From that same organization’s plan:

“Compared with the previous fiscal year, we reduced private vehicle fatality by over 10%.”

Note that now, only after the fact, the plan specifies indisputable results. But they are only cherry-picking successes to brag about, not planning successes to achieve. This is cheating, not leading.

When Babe Ruth pointed to where he was going to hit the baseball, and then did it, he impressed everyone. But hitting a ball, and then pointing to where it went, impresses no one.

This is an excerpt from our book, *Precision Leadership: Four Principles To Target Results That Matter*, to be released late this summer.

