








Corporate Lifecycle Stages

									
	Courtship	Infancy	Go-Go	Adolescence	Prime	Stable	Aristocracy	Early Bureaucracy	Bureaucracy
Strategic Planning	Focus on SWOT & alignment.	Transition from ideas to action.	Avoid over-diversification.	Go from "More is better" to "Better is more."	Robust and tied to annual budgeting process. Plans fuel departmental and individual goal-setting and is tied to comp.	Ignore shareholders and image. Regroup teams around SWOT using statistics showing a lack of innovation.	Focus on individual groups or divisions that hit their goals and outperform.	Help trickle-down to individuals with specific, achievable, non-political goals.	Focus all planning efforts on the short-term: how to get the cost structure aligned, how to address creditors, etc.
Talent Acquisition & Talent Management	Convince others to share the vision. Recruit friends.	Organization will end without fodder. Outsource crucial tasks: deal making, fund raising and recruiting.	Identify and promote good managers or risk losing them. Think longer-term than immediate projects. Match people with projects. Avoid over-promoting.	Promote or hire operational leadership. Try to keep founder in power. Get strong #2's and #3's in place. Focus on on-boarding and acculturating.	Not enough innovative, productive change agents to run BU's. Employer of choice, where candidates apply directly and recruiting machine runs effectively. Morale and productivity are high.	Keep Hi-Po's. Create mini companies they can run. Recruit for creativity and urgency. Up-and-comers discouraged and leave for smaller organizations.	Make succession planning pragmatic, truthful and non-political. Recruit for innovation. Focus on keeping good talent from Go-Go companies.	Bring new blood continuously. Internal programs are ineffective and rarely used. Development is individual responsibility. Productivity and morale drop.	Outside leadership initiates changes, hiring freezes and temporary talent. Focus on Post-Chapter 11 management for rejuvenation.
Compensation	Work for free/equity.	Cash can be random or egalitarian. Pay is minimal or deferred with heavy reliance on equity.	Caution against too much equity or huge bonuses.	Focus on market-competitive balance between cash and equity.	Institutionalize entrepreneurialism through pay.	Revisit pay and reward innovation. Not just about hitting goals.	Reward creativity and contribution, not grade, level or tenure.	Comp is based on pay grades: structured, compression. Attempt to introduce accountability.	Further deterioration of the overall compensation. Executive comp questioned by shareholders. Attempts to "claw back" bonuses.
Benefits	N/A	Health only. Coverage dependent on spouse's insurance.	Avoid exuberance.	Evaluate offerings.	Competitive programs measured for ROI, company match, self-insure and competitive advantage.	Cut down on rich benefits plans that don't produce results. Continue self-insure. Watch for influences from acquisitions.	Use Board concern to cut down on expensive benefits. Deal with pension funding and retiree medical commitments.	Reduce/freeze pension accruals. Increase employee contributions to premiums and co-pays.	Extreme cost-cutting. Chapter 11, PBGB assumes pension liabilities, etc.
HRIS	N/A	Nothing or Excel spreadsheets.	Install cheap HRIS; no commitment.	Upgrade and integrate HRIS with other systems.	Customize and upgrade with ERP system to provide support.	Prepare for power struggle over who owns what (IT/HR). Cloud vs. Server.	Lots of money to be spent here, but can eat up too much time.	Revisit value vs. cost of maintenance and investments required to update systems.	Inefficient and redundant system. Lack of funds for investment in update/upgrade.
Performance Management	N/A	Recognize loyalty and endurance.	Simple and ongoing two-way communication.	Focus on core competencies and corporate performance. Don't overspend.	Focused on performance and development. 360 feedback with customer involvement.	Drastically simplify or throw away your system altogether.	Help develop skilled individual contributors and leaders outside the system, if necessary.	Employees recognize that politics supersedes performance.	An exercise in futility at this point. No longer about performance but tenure and connections.
Employee Relations	Role conflicts, founders' fears and commitment.	Help provide clarity, certainty and security.	Facilitate clarification around tasks and roles.	Convert turf wars to productivity. Counsel early employees who complain about changes.	Embrace change and healthy conflict. Nourish new growth.	Ignore morale issues from non high-performers. Fight complacency everywhere.	Fight against recrimination. Encourage dissenters.	Do not participate in blaming and witch hunts.	Complacency and no true accountability.
Learning & Development	Learning on the job.	Trial by error is critical to success.	Manager training for everyone including Founders.	Help organization change from goal-oriented to goal-driven.	Teach innovation. Balance between control and flexibility.	Re-evaluate your best-in-class, sophisticated programs for true ROI.	Expensive MBA's, etc. can be a good way to keep Hi-Po's.	Encourage personal career development for individuals stuck there.	Budget cuts affect quality, quantity and maintenance of programs.
Policies & Procedures	Everything is socialized.	Don't create structure or harm creative process.	Better to ask Founder than rely on anything in writing.	Design and implement formal programs with Founder buy-in.	Comprehensive via Intranet. Transparency when integrating M&A's. Shared services.	Watch out for policies that encourage mediocrity and mellow the organization.	Don't become a scapegoat over this area, nor over-change management.	The company becomes policy and process-driven to the point that innovation and creativity is smothered and the company cannot react fast enough to the market.	Outdated and not results-oriented. Focus becomes policy changes that impact survival (e.g. benefit changes, vacation taken vs. lost, etc)
Metrics & Analytics	N/A	Customer feedback drives direction.	Balance uncontrolled: Growth vs. Profitability. Focus on completion of projects.	Track bottom-line more than top. Use reports to help Founder evolve.	Lead with Scorecards or Dashboards.	Determine which metrics show innovation, growth and revitalization.	Avoid analysis paralysis. Focus on metrics tied to innovation and growth.	Management obsessed with metrics and analytics. Link between measures and performance is broken.	Metrics change to focus on survival and emerging from bankruptcy, with a focus on cost vs. product, quality or the needs of the market.
HR Legal Focus	Company structure.	Equity and IP. Careful with non-competes.	Prevent executive contracts, which will be regretted.	Termination liabilities. Employment status issues.	Keep compliance high to survive State & Federal audits, ERISA and restructuring.	Don't let this eat up your change agent leadership efforts.	Be aware of defensive legal approach impeding decision-making and rapid responses.	Focus on defense: soften unfair firings with generous packages, personal networking.	Rounds of RIF's, cost cutting on packages, focus on how to emerge out of Chapter 11 with the best possible image.