

SEVENTY-FIVE DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTIONS OF STRATEGY FROM THE LITERATURE

The following table shows 75 definitions and conceptions of strategy from authorities in multiple fields (categorized to the extent possible):

- Dictionary/encyclopedia
- Game theory/ Games/ Complexity theory
- Business, business textbooks
- Scenario planning
- Economics
- Military
- Generalists
- Geo-political/national security

Field	Author	Conception of strategy
Dictionary/ encyclopedia	Merriam-Webster	1 a (1) the science and art of employing the political, economic, psychological, and military forces of a nation or group of nations to afford the maximum support to adopted policies in peace or war (2) : the science and art of military command exercised to meet the enemy in combat under advantageous conditions; 2 a: a careful plan or method : a clever stratagem b : the art of devising or employing plans or stratagems toward a goal
Dictionary/ encyclopedia	OED (Oxford English Dictionary)	d.2.d In (theoretical) circumstances of competition or conflict, as in the theory of games, decision theory, business administration, etc., a plan for successful action based on the rationality and interdependence of the moves of the opposing participants
Dictionary/ encyclopedia	Wordsmyth Dictionary	A plan, method, or series of actions designed to achieve a specific goal or effect. (References in Grant, <i>Contemporary Strategy Analysis</i> , 2005, p 21)
Dictionary/ encyclopedia	International Encyclopedia of Business & Mgmt (M. Warner, 2001)	Firm's choice on how to deploy its resources
Game theory/ games	Dixit & Nalebuff The Art of Strategy (2008)	Such actions that change the game to ensure a better outcome for the player taking the actions are called strategic moves p151; Strategic moves, therefore, contain two elements: the planned course of action and the associated actions that make this course credible p154
Game theory/ games	McCain <i>Game Theory</i> , 2010	A strategy is an if-then rule. p32
Game theory/ games	Steve Badger <i>Poker Strategy vs. Poker Tactics</i> ¹	In poker, [strategy is] comprehensive planning and conduct for the long-term. Strategy gives us the course of action we take as

¹ Retrieved 9.5.2009; <http://www.stevebadger.com/poker/tactics/>

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		we attempt to achieve our goals. Tactics are maneuvers we do to carry out strategy.
Complexity theory	Axelrod & Cohen <i>Harnessing Complexity</i> (1999)	The way an agent responds to its surroundings and pursues its goals...deliberate choice...pattern of response p4; ...a conditional action pattern that indicates what to do in which circumstances p153 [These are both rules]
Complexity / game theory	John Holland <i>Emergence</i> (1998)	A strategy is a prescription that tells us what to do as the game unfolds... we define strategies in much the same way we define games, via a set of rules. p38-41
Complexity theory	Mitchell <i>Guided tour of complexity</i> , (2009)	...a strategy is a set of rules that gives, for any situation, the action you should take in that situation. (Kindle Location 2195)
Complexity theory	La Rocca <i>Strategy Emergence</i> , (2003)	In our search for a paradigm of strategy emergence nonmodernism finally provides rationales for conceiving strategy as both a blueprint and a process, as long as we recall that mediation is primary.
Business/ corporate	Ansoff, Igor <i>Corporate Strategy</i> (1965)	The first two sections of this chapter are devoted to developing a concept of strategy that 1.provides a broad concept of a firm's business, 2.sets forth specific guidelines by which the firm can conduct its research and, 3.supplements the firm's objectives with decisions which narrow the firm's selection process to the most attractive opportunities. P94
Business/ new business evolution	Bhidé <i>The Origin and Evolution of New Businesses</i> (2000)	Building a durable corporation requires long-term goals as well as rules to channel investments and initiatives towards the achievements of these goals. These rules – which I will call a “strategy” – have several dimensions. A strategy defines in broad terms where and how the firm will seek to add value, the opportunities it will pursue, the breadth and attributes of the firm's product lines, its pricing policies, distribution channels, technologies, R & D efforts, and so on. p 265
Business/ corporate	Chandler <i>Strategy & Structure</i> (1962/1989)	...the determination of the basic long-term goals and objectives of an enterprise and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out those goals”
Business/ Corporate	Drucker <i>Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices</i> (1973/2009)	Strategic planning... is the continuous process of making present risk-taking decisions systematically with the greatest knowledge of their futurity; organizing systematically the efforts needed to carry out these decisions; and measuring the results of these decisions against the expectations through organized, systematic feedback, p125; The early nineteenth-century business— and even the mid-nineteenth-century business— derived success from low costs. Successfully managing a business meant being able to produce the same commodities everybody else produced but at lower cost. In the twentieth century this then changed to what we now call “strategy” or analysis for the purpose of creating competitive advantage. p. xxxiii; Objectives must be derived from “what our business is, what it will be, and what it should be.” They are not abstractions. They are the action commitments through which the mission of a business is to be carried out, and the standards

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		against which performance is to be measured. Objectives, in other words, are the fundamental strategy of a business. p104
Business	Grimm, Lee & Smith <i>Strategy as Action</i> (2006)	...as action
Business	Hambrick & Fredrickson <i>Are you sure you have a strategy</i> (2005)	...a central, integrated, externally oriented concept of how the business will achieve its objectives. p52 ...a strategy has five elements: Arenas: where will we be active? Vehicles: how will we get there? Differentiators: how will we win in the marketplace? Staging: what will be our speed and sequence of moves? Economic logic: how will we obtain our returns?
Business	Latham, Ann <i>What The Heck Is A Strategy Anyway</i> ²	A strategy is a framework for making decisions about how you will play the game of business.
Business	Norton & Kaplan	A strategy is a set of hypotheses about cause and effect. <i>Balanced scorecard</i> (1996) p. 30; ...we approach strategy as choosing the market and the customer segments the business unit intends to serve, identifying the critical internal business processes that the unit excel at to deliver the value proposition to customers in the targeted market segments, and selecting the individual and organizational capabilities required for the internal, customer, and financial objectives. p. 37; The unique and sustainable ways in which organizations create value (<i>Strategy Focused Organization</i> , 2001, p2); A strategy encompasses various dimensions of organization change, from short-term productivity improvements to long-term innovation. (<i>The Execution premium</i> , 2008, p10 [Their index points to this definition of strategy])
Business	Collis and Rukstad <i>Can You Say What Your Strategy Is?</i> (2008)	The basic elements of a strategy statements are Objective = Ends Scope = Domain Advantage = Means ...a sustainable competitive advantage is the essence of strategy.
Business	Pisano <i>You Need an Innovation Strategy</i> (2015)	A strategy is nothing more than a commitment to a set of coherent, mutually reinforcing policies or behaviors aimed at achieving a specific competitive goal. [He also discusses strategy as a system]
Business	Porter <i>What is Strategy</i> (1996)	...is the creation of a unique and valuable position, involving a different set of activities...is making trade-offs in competing...creating fit among a company's activities; Strategy defines the company's distinctive approach to competing and the competitive advantages on which it will be based (<i>Strategic Thinking: Implications for Turkish Companies</i> , 2009.)
Business	Vermeulen	A real strategy involves a clear set of choices that define what the firm is going to do and what it's not going to do. Many

² <https://www.forbes.com/sites/annlatham/2017/10/29/what-the-heck-is-a-strategy-anyway/#38a3d3dc7ed8>

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	<i>Many Strategies Fail Because They're Not Actually Strategies (2017)</i>	strategies fail to get implemented because they do not represent such a set of clear choices. And many so-called strategies are in fact goals.
Business	Harvard <i>HBR Guide to Thinking Strategically (2017)</i>	Strategy is the practice of translating your organization's vision and purpose into a set of specific goals, and then developing plans and actions to achieve them. As such, strategy is all about choices—what to do and what not to do; where to invest and where to pull back; how fast or slowly [Mix of choices and plans to achieve aspirations
Michael D. Watkins	Michael Watkins <i>Demystifying Strategy_ The What, Who, How, and Why (2017)</i>	A business strategy is a set of guiding principles that, when communicated and adopted in the organization, generates a desired pattern of decision making.
Business (journalist)	Walter Kiechel <i>Seven Chapters of Strategic Wisdom (2011)</i>	Strategy itself is a distillation; it's a tight, internally coherent statement of what a company is and wants to be
Business/ general	Mintzberg <i>Tracking Strategies (2007)</i>	<p>...the four basic definitions of strategy (p341)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans for the future (intended strategy) • Patterns out of the past (realized strategy) • Positions on the ground (generally concerning products and markets) • Perspectives in the abstract ("theory of the business" in Peter Drucker's words)
Business/ general	Quinn, James Brian <i>Strategies for change (1980)</i>	...the pattern or plan that integrates an organization's major goals, policies and action sequences into a cohesive hole p7...Strategic goals and policies are important goals and policies. Policies are rules or guidelines...p7
Business/ general	Rumelt, Richard	<p>A good strategy is a set of actions that is credible, coherent, and focused on overcoming the biggest hurdle(s) in achieving a particular objective. (From <i>How to Become a Strategic Leader.2019.MIT Magazine.pdf</i>)</p> <p>A good strategy has an essential logical structure that I call the kernel. The kernel of a strategy contains three elements: a diagnosis, a guiding policy, and coherent action. KL253, p.7</p> <p>Good strategy is coherent action backed up by an argument, an effective mixture of thought and action with a basic underlying structure I call the kernel...the kernel consists of goals, policy and plans (<i>Good Strategy Bad Strategy, 2011</i>) KL1420. P77</p> <p>The guiding policy outlines an overall approach for overcoming the obstacles highlighted by the diagnosis. It is "guiding" because it channels action in certain directions without defining exactly what shall be done....Like the guardrails on a highway, the guiding policy directs and constrains action without fully defining its content. KL1543, p84</p>

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		...a set of objectives, policies and plans that, taken together, define the scope of the enterprise and its approach to survival and success (<i>Interview in McKinsey quarterly, Nov 2007</i>)
Business/ general	Fredmund Malik <i>Strategy: Navigating the Complexity of the New World</i> (2016)	Acting the right way, even when we do not know what the future will bring, and the rules required for right action. Strategy determines the path of development for an institution. The right strategy lays out the principles and guidelines that will guide an organization's activities in the long run These principles and guidelines will be changed as newly arising circumstances require
Business/ general	Roger Martin <i>Distinguishing Between Execution and Strategy</i> (2015)	... seizing unexpected opportunities is essentially strategy—not execution.
Business	Lafley and Martin <i>Playing to Win: How Strategy Really Works</i> (2015)	More specifically, strategy is an integrated set of choices that uniquely positions the firm in its industry so as to create sustainable advantage and superior value relative to the competition (KL116)
Business (CEO of Parsons Corporation)	Chuck Harrington	Rumelt reinforces that a strategy is the <u>set of actions</u> an organization or team should implement and, just as important, the actions an organization should avoid as they drive forward in their market. (From promotional statement on dustcover of Rumelt's <i>Good Strategy Bad Strategy</i> , 2011, Random House, Inc. Kindle Edition. L11)
Business	McKinsey Consulting <i>Thinking strategically</i> (2000)	An integrated set of actions designed to create a sustainable advantage over competitors
Business/ general	Gibbons, Paul <i>The Science of Successful Organizational Change</i> (2015)	What is commonly called change strategy is not very strategic because strategy properly focuses on goals and not on how to deliver those goals. p71
Business/ operations	Goldratt <i>The TOC approach to Strategy and Tactics</i> (2003)	Strategy, as we said, is setting the objective(s). In other words, the strategy sets the "What for?" Tactics, on the other hand, are supposed to tell us "How we are supposed to reach the objectives." In other words, tactics is answering the "How?"
Business operations	Hayes, et al (Business Operations, 2005)	An operations strategy is a set of goals, policies, and self-imposed restrictions that together describe how the organization proposes to direct and develop all the resources invested in operations so as to best fulfill (and possibly redefine) its mission. p33
Business	Kim and Mauborgne	<i>Blue Ocean Strategy</i> , 2005: Strategic Move... "the set of managerial actions and decisions involved in making a major market-creating business offering. How Strategy Shapes Structure (2009): Hence, we define strategy as the development and alignment of the three propositions [outputs, inputs, people] to either exploit or reconstruct the industrial and economic environment in which an organization operates.
Business/ pricing	Nagle et al <i>Pricing</i> (2011, 5/e)	The coordination of otherwise independent activities to achieve a common objective. p5

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Business (strategy textbook)	Collis & Montgomery (Corporate Strategy: a resourced based approach, 2005)	Corporate strategy is the way a company creates value through the configuration and coordination of its multimarket activities. p8
Business (strategy textbook)	David <i>Strategic Management</i> (2011)	...are the means by which long-term objectives will be achieved. Strategies are potential actions, p45; Policies are the means by which annual objectives will be met, p46; strategic planning is strategic management, p38
Business (strategy textbook)	Hax & Majluf <i>The Strategy Concept and Process</i> , 1991	The essence of strategy becomes the purposeful management of change towards the achievement of competitive advantage in every business in which the firm is engaged. ... a set of objectives supported by well-coordinated action programs aimed at establishing a long-term sustainable advantage over competitors. p 356 (stated slightly differently p 93)
Business (strategy textbook)	Hitt, Ireland & Hoskinsen <i>Strategic Management: Concepts and Cases</i> (2009, 8/e)	...an integrated and coordinated set of commitments and actions designed to exploit core competencies and gain a competitive advantage p4; The strategic management process is the full set of commitments, decisions and actions required for a firm to achieve strategic competitiveness and earn above-average returns p5 & 24
Business (strategy textbook)	Hofer and Schendel <i>Strategy Formulation: Analytical Concepts</i> (1978)	1 st : Fundamental means [an organization] will use, subject to environmental constraints to try to achieve its objectives. 2 nd : fundamental pattern of preset and planned resource deployments and environmental interactions that indicates how the organization will achieve its objectives. p25
Business (strategy textbook)	Johnson, Scholes & Whittington <i>Exploring Corporate Strategy</i> , 2008, 8/e	The direction and scope of an organization over the long term, which achieves advantage in a changing environment through its configuration of resources and competencies with the aim of fulfilling stakeholder expectations. p3
Business (strategy textbook)	Pearce II and Robinson (Strategic management, (2011, 12/e)	Strategic management is defined as the set of decisions and actions that result in the formulation and implementation of plans designed to achieve a company's objectives. It comprises 9 critical tasks... p3; By strategy, managers mean their large-scale, future-oriented plans for interacting with the competitive environment to achieve company objectives. p4
Business (strategy textbook)	Kluyver and Pearce <i>Strategy: A View from The Top</i> , 2011, 4/e	Strategy is about positioning an organization for competitive advantage. It involves making choices about which industries to participate in, what products and services to offer, and how to allocate corporate resources. Its primary goal is to create value for shareholders and other stakeholders by providing customer value. (Chapter 1); ³ Strategy is doing things differently; tactics is doing thing better [operationally]. 3 rd ed.: p5 [They state further that these "tactical things are "easily copied, so no long-term advantage].
Business (strategy textbook)	Wheelen & Hunger <i>Strategic Management and Strategic Policy</i> , (2010, 12/e)	A strategy of a corporation forms a comprehensive master plan that states how the corporation will achieve its mission and objectives. p19; Strategy formulation is the development of

³ They say strategy cannot be described in one sentence.

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		long-range plans...it includes defining the corporate mission, specifying achievable objectives, developing strategies and setting policy guidelines. p17
Scenario planning	Schwartz, Peter <i>The Art of the Long View</i> (2012)	...the setting of priorities for the company's long-term development
Scenario planning	Lindgren & Bandhold <i>Scenario planning</i> (2009)	They adopt Quinn's (1980) definition (See Business/General)
Scenario planning/general	van der Heijden <i>Scenarios: The Art of the Strategic Conversation</i> (2005)	The essence of strategy is invention. p52; Strategy is the art of making choices p207; The essence of successful strategy is in being different from others p216
Economics/business	Kay <i>The Structure of Strategy</i> (1993)	...is a sequence of united events that amounts to a coherent pattern of business behavior p7
Economics/business	Besanko and Dranove <i>Economics of Strategy</i> (2010, 6/e)	In section: Framework for Strategy...a firm must confront four broad classes of issues: Boundaries of the firm, Markets and competitive analysis, Position and dynamics, Internal organization p3
Military	US Military <i>Joint Publication 3-0</i> (2011)	...a prudent idea or set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and/or multinational objectives; ...the art and science of developing and employing instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and/ or multinational objectives... [The explanation in the Joint Encyclopedia goes a little further: These strategies integrate national and military objectives (ends), national policies and military concepts (ways), and...]
Military	Bartholomees <i>US Army War College Guide to National Security Issues. Volume 1: Theory of War and Strategy</i> (2010)	Conceptually, we define strategy as the relationship among ends, ways, and means. Alternatively, Strategic art, broadly defined, is therefore: The skillful formulation, coordination, and application of ends (objectives), ways (courses of action), and means (supporting resources) to promote and defend the national interests.p15 [See p17 for his discussion of strategy as patterns]
Military	NATO <i>NATO.AAP-6</i> (2008).	Military strategy: That component of national or multinational strategy, presenting the manner in which military power should be developed and applied to achieve national objectives or those of a group of nations.
Military	Clausewitz <i>Art of War</i> (Parent ed.,1976)	Strategy is the use of the engagement for the purpose of the war. Little-hart (p320) says Clausewitz defined strategy as The art of the employment of battles as a means to gain the objects of war
Military	Gartner <i>Strategic Assessment in War</i> (1997)	...represents the way an organization operates a class of military forces to achieve specific aims against an adversary. p18

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Military/ national defense	Gompert et.al. <i>Analysis of Strategy and Strategies of Analysis</i> (2008)	The essence of a winning strategy is the exploitation of core strengths to achieve important results. p12
Military/ national defense	Colin Gray	Grand strategy: ...the direction and use made of any or all the assets of a security community, including its military instrument, for the purposes of policy as decided by politics. p9; "...the use that is made of force and the threat of force for the ends of policy (From Bartholomees A Survey of the Theory of Strategy)
Military/naval	Huges <i>Naval Maneuver Warfare</i> (1997)	...strategy prescribes wartime goals and missions governed by purposes on the land
Military	Jablonsky, David <i>Why is Strategy Difficult?</i> (1992)	...Lykke has taught an entire generation of U.S. Army War College students that strategy at any level consists of ends or objectives, ways or concepts, and means or resources. This three-element framework is nothing more than a reworking of the traditional definition of strategy as the calculated relationship of ends and means.
Military	Lykke <i>Toward An Understanding of Military Strategy</i> (1989)	Ends, ways, means
Military	Liddell Hart <i>Strategy</i> (1967/1991)	...the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfill the ends of policy p321; The role of Grand strategy...is to co-ordinate and direct all the resources of a nation or band of nations, towards the attainment of the political object of the war. p321
Military	Moltke	Little-Hart (p320) says Motke's definition is: the practical adaptation the means placed at a general's disposal to the attainment of the object of war
Military/ political	Yarger <i>Little book of big strategy</i> (2006)	In simplistic terms, strategy at all levels is the calculation of objectives, concepts, and resources within acceptable bounds of risk to create more favorable outcomes than might otherwise exist by chance or at the hands of others.
Military	Mao <i>Problems Of Strategy In China's Revolutionary War</i> (1936)	The task of the science of strategy is to study those laws [law in the sense of rule] for directing a war that govern a war situation as a whole. The task of the science of campaigns and the science of tactics is to study those laws for directing a war that govern a partial situation.
General	Sull and Eisenhardt	...as simple rules (Simple Rules: <i>How to Thrive in a Complex World</i> , (2014, heading, p 119)...When applied to a critical bottleneck, carefully crafted, and used in a mindful manner, simple rules can guide the activities that matter. (Simple Rules for a Complex World, 2012)
General/ business (consultant)	Mike Freedman with Benjamin TreGoe <i>The Art and Discipline of Strategic Leadership</i> (2003)	Strategy is the framework of choices that determine the nature and direction of an organization...Strategy is concerned with what an organization aims to be, and why. Operations constitute the how to get there. p17
General/ social science	Herbert Simon	At each moment the behaving subject, or the organization composed of numbers of such individuals, is confronted with a

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	<i>Administrative Behavior</i> (1997, 4/e)	large number of alternative behaviors, some of which are present in consciousness and some of which are not. Decision, or choice, as the term is used here, is the process by which one of these alternatives for each moment's behavior is selected to be carried out. The series of such decisions which determines behavior over some stretch of time may be called a strategy. p77
Geo-political/ military	Posen <i>The Struggle against Terrorism: Grand Strategy, Strategy, and Tactics</i> (2001)	A strategy lays out an interlinked chain of problems that must be solved to address the ultimate problem, the defeat of the adversary.
Geo-political	Hal Brands <i>What Good is Grand Strategy: Power & Purpose in American Statecraft from Harry S. Truman to George W. Bush</i> (2014)	Reduced to its essence, grand strategy is the intellectual architecture that lends structure to foreign policy; it is the logic that helps states navigate a complex and dangerous world. p1 ... a grand strategy is a purposeful and coherent set of ideas about what a nation seeks to accomplish in the world, and how it should go about doing so. p3
Geo-political/ national security	Garofano <i>Alternate Security Strategies: The Strategic Feasibility of Various Notions of Security</i> (Slide presentation, 2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A plan for matching means to ends b. Increasing capabilities and defining and prioritizing goals c. Adjusting to changes on either side of the means-ends equation d. Dynamic, sophisticated plan e. Requires the management of complex organizations f. Multiple audiences (public, bureaucratic, allied, future legacy) g. Multiple executors (military, national, grand, international)
Geo-political	Yale University: <i>The Brady-Johnson Program in Grand Strategy</i>	The program defines 'grand strategy' as a comprehensive plan of action, based on the calculated relationship of means to large ends. (Also quoted in: Dolman et al.2006.Toward a U.S. Grand Strategy for Space)
Geo-political	Brandao <i>The Internal-External Nexus In The Security Narrative of the EU</i> (2015)	...as collective practical wisdom developed by political actors so as to be prepared and lead hostile confrontation against one another.