

Systems for the Strategic Self

You commit, then you find out. You reason a hire, a price, a pivot through in your head, decide it feels right, and run the experiment for real, with money on the line. When it fails, you call the wreckage a lesson, as if there were no cheaper place to learn it. The market becomes the only room where your strategy is tested, and it charges full price.

The usual advice is to move fast and trust that you will figure it out in flight. That holds until the call is large and irreversible, and then "figure it out later" is just tuition for what a few hours of structured thinking would have shown you for free.

The Simulation Table treats strategy the way an engineer treats a design: something you stress-test on the bench before staking anything real on it. It introduces SIMULATE: a system for war-gaming a decision against opponents, second-order effects, and your own blind spots, so the expensive surprises happen at the table, not in the market. This is operator-grade rehearsal, not forecasting theater.

You will learn to:

- State the decision and its real stakes before you defend an answer.
- Map the live players (competitors, customers, regulators, your team) and play their moves, not the ones you wish for.
- Run the scenario forward through the second- and third-order effects where most strategies quietly break.
- Attack your own plan from the other side of the table before the market does.
- Turn what the simulation reveals into a committed call with explicit kill criteria, then test the result against your prediction.

The result is not a slower founder who never commits. It is an operator who walks into the irreversible call (on a Thursday afternoon, with partial information) having already lost the cheap version of it first.

If your decisions move real resources and you are done discovering the downside only after you have paid for it, this is the table you have been deciding without.

Len P. van der Hof, MSc

He builds operating systems for the strategic self. Treats entrepreneurship, AI and machine learning, marketing, philosophy, psychology, and health optimization as one engineering problem. MSc in Strategic Entrepreneurship, Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University.