STRATEGY | LEADERSHIP | ORGANIZATION

Strategy & Organizational Engineering
A s i a   P a c i f i c   P t e   L t d

Editors Note:

This quarterly e-journal takes over from the previous "Leadership, Strategy & Talent Edge Sharing Point" newsletter. This new format reflects a move to provide readers a broader range of content in future issues covering both short articles & case study research papers covering various topics on business & management.

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Marketing Communication & PR to support Sales Growth

Revenue growth may come from hunting activities by sales professionals aimed at increasing the number of customers, alternatively it may result from harvesting efforts aimed at increasing the volume of sales to existing customers and finally it could be a result of increasing price assuming that customers and the market will accept. Marketing communication and public relations activities can help organizational effort to grow revenue if they are aligned with sales growth plans. A sales growth enabling marketing communication and public relations program requires a structured process to align efforts and a seven step process to achieve this is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1
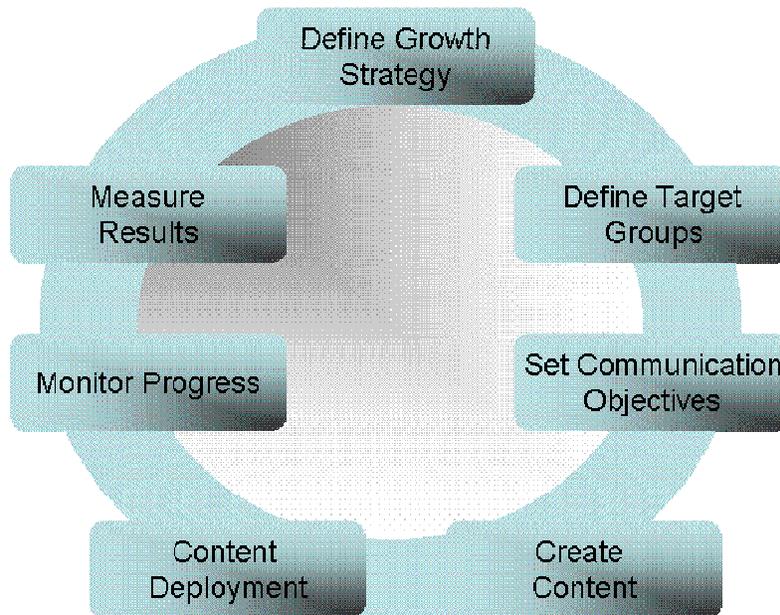
An outline of each step is as follows:
1. **Define growth strategy**: This is a simple and clear statement outlining where the organization will seek to achieve its growth.
2. **Define target groups**: This is a list of groups that the organization needs to reach through its marketing communication and public relations efforts to create awareness, generate interest and generate demand. Examples of target groups could be, specific customers, internal employees, influence groups, etc.
3. **Set communication objectives**: SMART objectives for each target group need to be defined. (SMART = Specific, Measurable, Action Oriented, Realistic & Time bound).
4. **Create content**: The creation of content should start with a detailed analysis of available information about target groups on issues such as their interest, needs, buying patterns, influencers, decision criteria, etc.
5. **Content deployment**: This is achieved by developed a coordinated plan combining the most suitable available media to reach target groups. Examples of media include:
   a. Online public relations media (e.g. blogs, media alerting services)
   b. Online partnership arrangements
   c. Offline communications (e.g. direct mail, exhibitions, merchandising, advertisements, sponsorships, sales promotions)

      d. Viral marketing (e.g. pass along emails, word of mouth, generating media mentions)

      e. Opt-in-e-mails services

      f. Interactive ads

      g. Search marketing (e.g. search engines, paid search, pay-per-clicks)

6. **Monitor progress:** This involves tracking actions completed against plan. Evaluating if intermediate goals and positive progress is being made or if changes are required.

7. **Measure results:** Results need to be compared against pre-established objectives. This builds accountability for results.

Performing Under Uncertainty

Uncertainty is here to stay and leaders need to reflect on the question: "Why do some organizations perform better than others under good and challenging times?" According to Covey and Whitman (2011), four sources of trouble within organizations include: **(1) Failure to execute, (2) Lack of trust, (3) Lack of focus (4) Excessive emphasis on the negative** creating pervasive fear and crippling progress. If these are the key reasons causing organizations to stumble what can be done to overcome them?

A list of practical actions that can be deployed to help organizations overcome these performance inhibitors during times of uncertainty include:

- Establish clear and simple goals with linked performance measures;
- Review progress toward goals regular for accountability and control;
- Help team members understand their role, responsibilities and how things align up with higher level priorities;
- Invest time and effort to build trust and engagement across the organization;
- Maintain a constant focus on the customer and how value may be shifting in relation to needs, wants and priorities;
- Apply creativity to challenge existing conventions and practices used to deliver results. When resources are limited new methods and choices need to be made to do more with less.
- Manage fear and conflict by investing time to explain the current situations openly and clearly defining how the organization will address those challenges.

The positive contribution each action from the above list will have on the four troubles identified is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Leadership Actions	Performance Inhibitors			
	Failure to Execute	Lack of Trust	Emphasis on the Negative	Lack of Focus
Establish clear & simple goals	X	X		X
Review progress regularly	X			X
Help members understand roles, responsibilities & linkages	X	X		X
Invest to build trust & engagement	X	X		
Maintain focus on customers			X	X
Apply creativity to existing processes for improved efficiency	X		X	
Use open communication & clear counter actions plans to manage fear and conflict		X	X	X

Trying to predict the future is a waste of time. Thus what organizations and their leaders should focus on is to consider possible alternative scenarios, have options that they can pursue identified and keep on top of things as they develop to ensure timely decision making and actions.

## Strategy Implementation Framework

Effective strategy or plan implementation is a competence relevant to all leaders and effective implementation is a source of competitive advantage. There are many organizations that have continued to grow and perform by being a quick number 2 in the market. Their differentiation lies in their ability to copy and deploy faster than other competitors.

Leaders need to know have an approach that answers the question: What do I need to consider for improved implementation effectiveness?

Implementation efforts improve when the following 11 components (Figure 3) are addressed effectively:

- **Values** – These need to be defined and promoted to create a set of unwritten rules that hold the project implementation team or organization together and provide broad guidelines for decision making.
- **Vision** – Clearly communicate the desired future state and results that all members need to keep their focus on.
- **Strategic clarity** – Broad directional goals need to be defined together with a perspective on the path that will be taken. Where multiple strategic initiatives have been identified their interconnection and linkages need to be explained for an integrated perspective.
- **Structure & decision rights** – Working relationships, roles, responsibilities, authority and decision rights need to be defined. Mechanisms that facilitate and encourage cooperation and co-ordination need to be established.
- **Initiatives / Projects** – Major implementation initiatives need to be broken down into smaller projects allowing progress to be tracked and early wins celebrated.
- **Budgets & resource allocation** – Adequate financial, intellectual and physical resources need to be provided to enable timely deployment.
- **Information & reports** – Information required at each stage of the project to facilitate control, coordination and decision making need to be identified, tracked and circulated.
- **Measures & controls** – Performance measures need to be defined and controls put in place to track progress and to highlight situations requiring timely corrective actions.
- **Reflective learning & improvement –** Implementation itself creates new knowledge and learning for those involved. New knowledge from practice needs to be reflected upon, shared and used as a driver for continuously improvement and the refinement of strategies and plans.
- **Recognition & Rewards** – Achievements need to be recognized and rewarded. Suitable financial and non-financial incentives need to be designed, communicated and deployed to drive commitment, motivation, alignment and engagement.

Figure 3
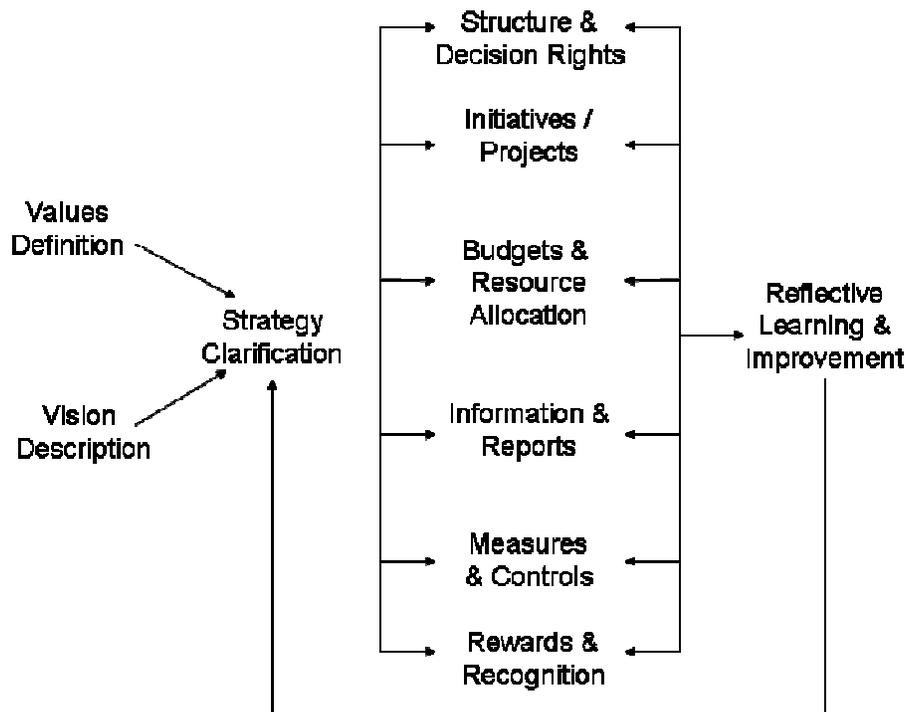
These eleven elements should be used as a checklist of items that need to be addressed for successful strategy and project implementation. Leaders should evaluate how each of the elements has been addressed and their alignment prior to launching major strategy implementation initiatives thus improving the chances of success.

Eight step process to map strategic human capital needs for enhanced strategy deployment

At the center of all strategic thinking and deployment efforts are people. People are responsible to develop, plan and deploy strategies at various levels in the organization. Organizations need to map out their human capital needs to support strategy and strategic management. A simple eight step process to achieve this is outlined Figure 4.

Figure 4
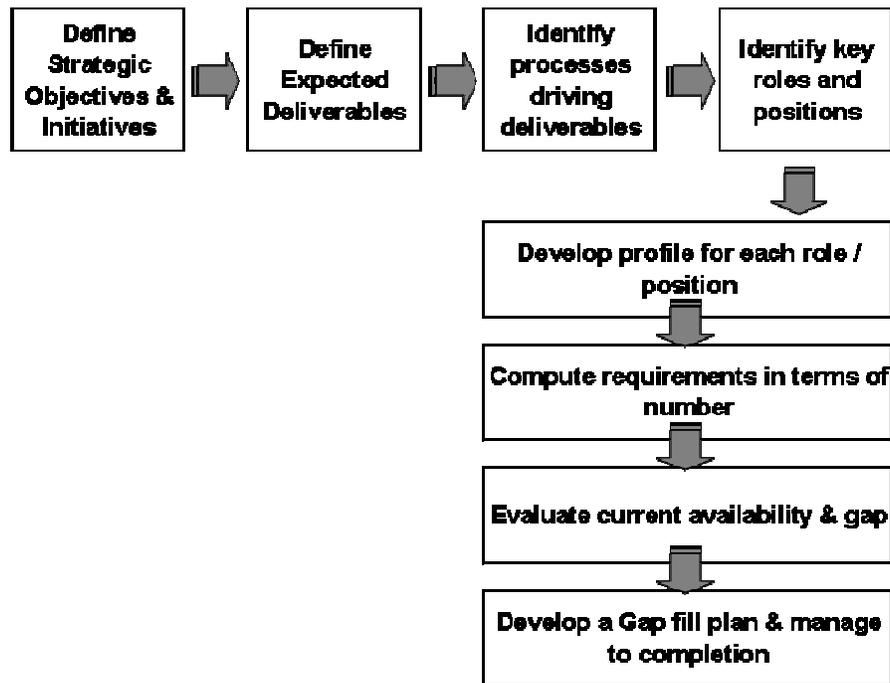
- **Step 1**   Define strategic objectives and initiatives of the enterprise. Without a clear strategy and direction it is quite difficult to identify human capital needs.

- **Step 2**   Define the expected deliverables across the various functions and / or levels that will lead to the achievement of strategic objectives.

- **Step 3**   Identify the key processes that cut across the organization that enable the achievement of expected deliverables.

- **Step 4**   Identify the key roles / positions responsible for processes success.

- **Step 5**   Develop a role profile outlining the competencies, values and experiences required.

- **Step 6**   Estimate the number required for each key role / positions

- **Step 7**   Evaluate current availability in terms of numbers and competencies versus requirements.

- **Step 8**Develop an integrated human capital gap fill plan incorporating tactics involving recruitment, training, career development, outsourcing, service contracting, alliances, etc.

Disciplined planning and management of human capital to support strategy needs to be applied in organizations for success. The importance of this aspect of strategy cannot be delegated to a single function such as human resources but needs to be embraced by leaders at all levels as they continue to get things done through others.

- End of Issue -

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