right lane review

May 2016

Strategy: lessons from the field

At this time of year we are typically in the middle of helping many clients with their strategy and planning processes.

As such we are intimately familiar with the conference centres of Australia and we've tasted many conference coffees and sandwiches too!

The coffee isn't great but the incidental chats we have with clients are. It's those moments between sessions over a scone, when we get to know the human side of your business; what you're focussing on, what's been great and what might be keeping you awake at night. These conversations give us valuable insights, and so in this issue of Right Lane Review titled 'Strategy: lessons from the field' we discuss some of the questions that have been important to our clients over the last year:

- How can boards engage with strategy in the most impactful way?
- When is the right time to 'flick the switch' between the conceptual and the pragmatic work of strategy?
- How do you go about stimulating transformative ideas?
- How do you approach a discussion about vision in order to get the best result?
- What are the different approaches to cascading strategy and which one might be best for your organisation?

We hope you enjoy this issue and that these articles are thought starters and topics of conversation for your organisation.

As ever, helping you with your highest strategic priorities is what energises our team. Save us from the watered down bitterness of conference coffee and please call so we can have these conversations over a decent espresso instead!

Giselle Diego
Right Lane Consulting

In this issue

1. What is the board's role in strategy?

The why, what and how of the board's role in strategy is a rich topic – without traversing the related area of how much time the board devotes to strategy. Collaborative work on strategy between boards and executive teams improves relationships and in our experience delivers better results.

2. Strategic thinking before strategic planning - know where to start and where to finish

A strategy without a plan is too conceptual. A plan without a strategy is hollow. What is your strategy and what does it mean for what you are actually going to do?

3. It all starts with an idea

Ideation sessions push participants to engage in future horizon thinking. In particular, to help ensure you are staying ahead of disruptive forces and leveraging shifts in technology, consumer behaviour and government policy for your organisation's gain.

4. Preparing for the vision discussion

Asking boards and executive teams to articulate the change they want to see in the world and the distinctive role their organisation will play in creating that change brings a vision discussion back to what really matters. Gaining broad input – for example, from staff and customers – can enrich the thinking.

5. Cascading strategy - options for alignment

Cascading strategy seems like it should be relatively simple, but real strategic alignment is, in our experience, challenging to achieve. Whichever method you choose, you need to make it a priority and spend the necessary time to get it right.

what is the board's role in strategy?

by marc levy, debbie williams & david hershan

Right thinking

The why, what and how of the board's role in strategy is a rich topic – without traversing the related area of how much time the board devotes to strategy.

Collaborative work on strategy between boards and executive teams improves relationships and in our experience delivers better results. Where possible, we recommend that clients adopt a collaborative approach to strategy involving both directors and members of the executive team as equals.

'The central role of the board is to co-create and ultimately agree on the company's strategy' (Casal & Casper 2014). We all know that of course, but aspects of the why, what and how of board engagement in strategy are still contested in theory and practice.

Through engaging with boards and executive teams on strategy development, strategic planning, strategy implementation and strategy monitoring and review, every week for nearly 20 years, our firm has developed a view about the **why, what and how** of board engagement in strategy, which we will outline in this article.

The 'why' of board engagement

The why should be clear enough, although there is a surprisingly modest literature on the subject. With respect to strategy, boards extend strategic discussions, by, for example, contributing external perspectives and a diversity of expertise and experience. In these

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and other ways, they also diminish the risks inherent in the work of strategy.

The 'what' of board engagement

There is a wealth of scholarly literature and business research on the what of board engagement in strategy. Cossin and Metayer (2014) describe three roles that the board should play. These are:

- **Supervisor:** supervising strategy development, design and implementation, monitoring corporate performance, probing and sensing underlying conditions, and identifying risks and strategic inconsistencies that could threaten the business
- **Creator:** directly contributing to the strategy of the company with a broader perspective than that of management, including bringing experience beyond the industry, understanding stakeholder perspectives, that can avoid cultural blind spots
- **Supporter:** lending the strategy credibility and authority (or, in some cases, withholding support to pressure management) and garnering support both within and outside the organisation.

These seem sensible, although it is worth noting that not everyone agrees on them and that there may still be considerable overlap between these and the responsibilities of executive teams. This lack of role clarity between boards and executive teams highlights the importance of the how of board engagement in strategy, to which we will return later.

A global survey of directors (McKinsey & Company 2006) suggested that a board could: help develop the strategy's content; identify key strategic issues; challenge an emerging strategy; approve the final strategy; and monitor performance against strategy (different directors reported doing different combinations of these activities).

We typically use a list like this in helping our clients navigate the board's role. We advise chairs and CEOs to have their organisations' boards involved at a number of points in the strategy development process: at the start, to set expectations, suggest themes and push the executive team's thinking; mid-way through, to work on goal setting and initiative prioritisation (an important aspect of the how of board engagement, described later); at the end to endorse the strategy, subject to any changes, and oversee how the strategy is reflected in the organisation's planning, resource allocation and budgeting. Then on a regular basis afterwards, typically quarterly, they should monitor and review performance against the strategy.

The 'how' of board engagement

The how of board engagement in strategy is more difficult to define. Right Lane and others (for example, Bosch 2002) have suggested that there have been different eras of board responsibility for strategy:

- executive driven – management recommended and board endorsed in the 1980s
- board owned – corporate excesses in the 1980s led to board control in the 1990s
- collaborative – boards and executive teams collaborating to develop and set the strategy.

It has not always been that linear – the board's role in strategy has evolved in different ways over different time horizons. For our clients in superannuation, the first two eras were reversed. With small staffs in the 1980s and 1990s, directors took the lead on strategy; but as trustee offices grew in the 2000s, executive teams began to assert their role.

Still, we do believe that we are in an era of collaboration between boards and executive teams when it comes to strategy. We need to be less concerned about the mutual exclusivity of their roles – creating roles for these groups that intersect like pieces in a puzzle – and more concerned about getting the most from board involvement in strategy. Where executive teams and boards play binary roles – for example, executive teams create and boards endorse – directors can be left to feel like they are having something done to them.

We do believe that we are in an era of collaboration between boards and executive teams when it comes to strategy.

We need to be less concerned about the mutual exclusivity of their roles - creating roles for these groups that intersect like pieces in a puzzle - and more concerned about getting the most from board involvement in strategy.

Where possible, we recommend that clients adopt a collaborative approach to strategy involving both directors and members of the executive team as equals. But by the time they ask for our help, some clients are either too far along with their strategies to foster co-development, or they are not used to it and prefer a more formal approach.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to achieving this collaboration. It will depend on the organisational context, which includes the maturity of the organisation and experience of the management team, industry complexity and market dynamics, and the skill set of the board. For inexperienced management teams in complex industries it will be more important for boards to play a more hands on role in strategy.

At one client, there was some awkwardness between the board and executive team on key strategic issues regarding the organisation's future role and where it should focus its efforts. We ran a strategy offsite with the full board and executive and had them work on these topics together. In one session, participants worked in groups on goal setting and initiative prioritisation, thinking through whether management's proposed initiatives would meet the goals that had been set, ascribing higher priority to some initiatives and deprioritising others.

At another client, we used a method derived from the assessment of PhD theses to gain the board's input to the emerging strategy proposed by management. The executive put to the board as set of propositions and the board was then able to assess them based on criteria similar to PhD examiners: endorsed with no change; endorsed subject to changes agreed by the board; do further work as specified and revert to the board for a decision; or dismissed. This helped to focus discussion between board and management and enabled the board to play key roles in strategy – to push the executive team's thinking, provide input on initiatives and ultimately endorse the strategy, subject to agreed changes.

These collaborative approaches were productive in that they improved upon management's work; but they also gave directors (and senior executives) a strong sense of process satisfaction. In the previously mentioned survey (McKinsey & Company 2006), directors who were satisfied with their company's approach to strategic planning were twice as likely as dissatisfied respondents to say their boards help develop strategy.

The why, what and how of the board's role in strategy is a rich topic – without traversing the related area of how much time the board devotes to strategy. Collaborative work on strategy between boards and executive teams improves relationships and in our experience delivers better results. As one director recently put it:

'I think (it's) the best strategy offsite I've been to, because it was the first time we've really worked together with management on the strategy.'

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want to know more?

If you would like Right Lane to help you work out how best your board can be involved in strategy contact **Debbie Williams:**

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may 2016

2

article

strategic thinking before strategic planning

by marc levy

Right thinking

A strategy without a plan is too conceptual. A plan without a strategy is hollow. What is your strategy and what does it mean for what you are actually going to do?

Timeless strategic questions (strategic thinking), which resonate with our clients, must be satisfactorily answered 'upstairs' before clients move 'downstairs' to strategic planning.

Strategic plans should comprise strategic objectives and attendant measures, priority initiatives and a measurement monitoring and review cycle.

Helping clients with their strategy and planning processes is a major part of our practice.

This year our firm will help nearly 50 organisations with their annual strategy and planning cycles – conducting analysis, taking executive teams and boards offsite, documenting strategic plans, and assisting them with implementation, measurement, monitoring and review. I've personally helped more than 100 organisations with their strategy and planning work over 20 years.

In this work we are frequently asked about the interplay between strategy and strategic planning. Are they the same thing or not? There is a rich body of literature on this topic, typically lauding adaptive strategy development and lampooning rigid strategic planning.

We have a different view about the value of planning, and the confluence and complementarity of the two disciplines. A strategy without a plan is too conceptual. What does the strategy mean for what you are actually going to do? It is certainly possible to draft a strategic plan having paid little or no consideration to central strategic questions like where are you going to compete and how are you going to win. However, a plan without a strategy is hollow.

Our work in this area is inspired by leading international strategy academics and practitioners, like Jeanne Liedtka (1998), Ken Favaro (2013), Roger Martin (Lafley & Martin 2013) and Robert Kaplan and David Norton (2008).

Exhibit 1 (overleaf) makes the distinction between strategic thinking and strategic planning. As it shows, the former tends to be more divergent, creative and synthetic and the latter more analytical, convergent; the former can disrupt an organisation's agenda the latter align it.

We centre our strategy work with clients on a handful of strategic questions. We've written about strategic questions before (refer Right Lane Review June 2014). As shown in exhibit 2 we sometimes employ Roger Martin's five strategic questions (2012) to focus clients' strategy development efforts.

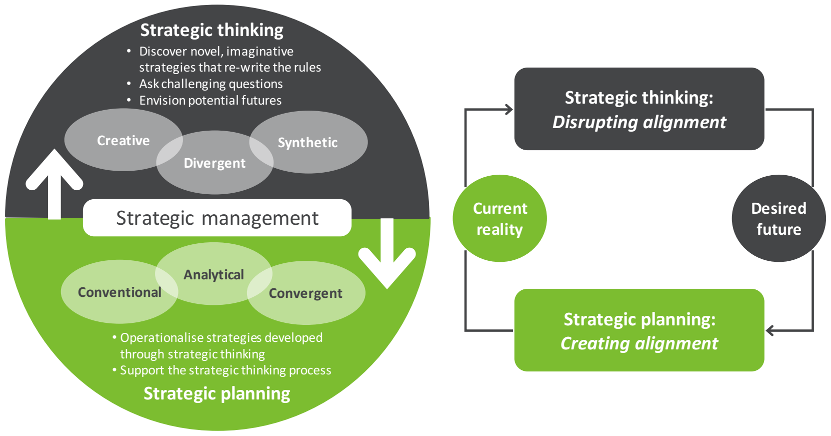
These timeless strategic questions, which resonate with our clients, must be satisfactorily answered 'upstairs' before clients move 'downstairs' to strategic planning, the elements of which are perhaps best reflected in the work of the creators of the balanced scorecard, Robert Kaplan and David Norton (1998). Their work suggests that strategic plans should comprise strategic objectives and attendant measures, priority initiatives and a measurement monitoring and review cycle.

The strategy development should precede the planning; because, for example, you can't make a good fist of initiative prioritisation and resource allocation unless you've 'been granular' about where to compete (Bradley et al 2011). Equally, there's not much point creating a galvanising aspiration if you can't action it.

We frequently tell the story of a healthcare client who identified seven distinct customer cohorts as equally important. This was not a recipe for focus and the client needed to think through prioritisation of these customers, before it could start on objective setting.

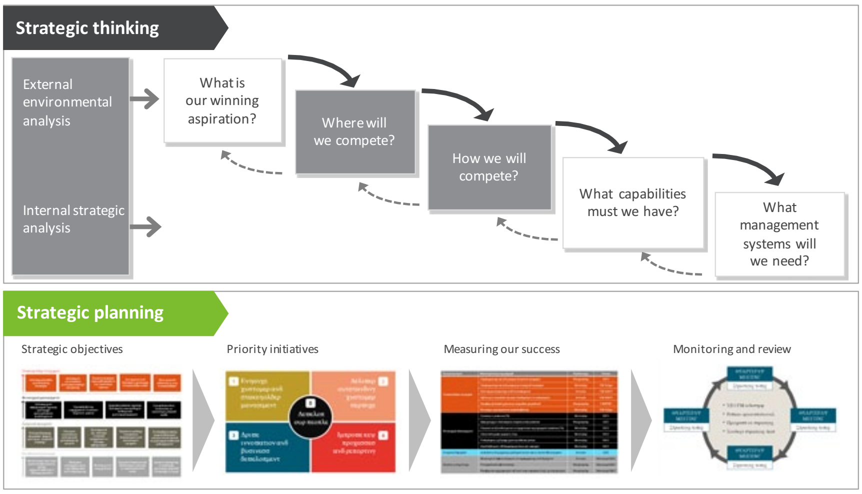
We are not the first to make this observation about the distinction between strategy and planning. Ken Favaro (2013) makes a similar point in his work on the 'strategic five' and the 'corporate five'. However, much of the literature unhelpfully sets strategy and planning up as a trade off or dichotomy. We believe that they are necessarily complementary and entwined.

Exhibit 1: Strategic thinking and strategic planning



Source: Adapted by Right Lane Consulting from: Heracleous, L 1998 'Strategic thinking or strategic planning', *Long Range Planning*, Vol. 31, No. 3, pp. 481-487; Liedtka, J 1998 'Linking strategic thinking with strategic planning', *Strategy and Leadership*, vol. 1, pp. 120-129.

Exhibit 2: Five strategic questions



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want to know more?

If you would like Right Lane to help with your strategy and planning process, contact **Marc Levy:**

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it all starts with an idea

How to run a regular ideation process to stay relevant and remain at the forefront of your industry

by david hershan

Right thinking

- An approach that we regularly employ to obtaining and extending the best internal thinking is to run ideation sessions as part of the regular strategic and business planning cycle.
- Ideation sessions push participants to engage in future horizon thinking. In particular, to ensure you are staying ahead of disruptive forces and leveraging shifts in technology, consumer behaviour and government policy for your organisation's gain.
- These sessions typically involve up to ten of the organisation's leading thinkers in scanning the external environment, capturing current thinking, extending the thinking using structured ideation approaches and then prioritising ideas for validation and testing.

1. We define business models as the means and methods a firm employs to earn the revenue projected in its plans (Business Dictionary 2016)

Business models are evolving at an alarmingly rapid pace[1]

Reasons for the increasing speed of change include the relatively low cost of trialling new business models using digital channels, responsiveness of consumers to new offerings and an army of disruptive thinkers wanting to extract value from the value chains of existing industries. Fintech, where $12b was invested in new technologies in 2014, up from $4b in 2013 (Pignal 2015), is an example of a value chain that disruptive thinkers are targeting.

There are many ways to generate ideas to stay relevant to your customers and their future needs. Most of these ideas are obvious and include: reading widely to identify business model ideas that could transition easily from other industries; staying engaged and curious during your regular schedule of external meetings; and attending select events that extend your thinking. An often overlooked channel is soliciting and capturing the best ideas of the people within your organisation.

An approach that we regularly employ to obtaining and extending the best internal thinking is to run **ideation sessions** as part of the regular strategic and business planning cycle. We have found that running workshops that engage the organisation's best thinkers to address a major pain point is a highly effective tool for leaders wanting to cultivate an innovative culture. These sessions typically involve up to ten of the organisation's leading thinkers in scanning the external environment, capturing ideas using structured ideation approaches and prioritising ideas for validation and testing.

The benefits of this approach

Benefits of incorporating regular ideation sessions into your strategic and business planning cycle are that it:

- Enables the regular identification of structural changes in the industry and discussion of whether they can be leveraged for the organisation's gain
- Brings participants closer to your customers and their evolving preferences by interrogating ways to better satisfy future customer needs
- Provides context and a sense of ownership to workshop attendees likely to be involved in implementing the solution/s identified
- Enables participants to maintain a greater focus on day-to-day operations, knowing that there are regular forums to confirm you are 'working on the right things'.

By having a wide range of your leading thinkers involved in the workshop you will be well placed to make go / no go decisions on ideas raised and determine the best approach to validating the ideas after the workshop.

About the process

A pre-diagnosis of 'what the organisation is solving for' in the ideation workshop is the first step. This is generally done by diagnosing the organisation's most critical 'pain point' in a one-on-one discussion with the person championing the session.

Once this is determined, we: prepare the ground for the ideation workshop by compiling context on developments in the external environment; determine some useful idea triggers to add into the mix; and create a pre-workshop activity pack to get participants into the right head space.

In the workshop itself, we aim to have ten or fewer participants and the right mix of personality types. In particular we attempt to ensure that there are a couple of your best 'imagine the future' people present. Having participants who are naturally inclined to collaborate and develop the ideas of others is also beneficial.

Insights from our experience

Start with looking back before looking to the future – An illustration of an organisation that lost sight of 'what it was famous for' in the lead up to an ideation session is Lego. Lego was the world's most valuable brand in 2015. In the 90's Lego ran into trouble because it had external advice that suggested: 'this piece of plastic, this brick is really obsolete, it's been around since the '50s, why don't you diversify into all kinds of other toys that your competitors are doing' (Durkin 2015). Being clear about the strategic choices you have made and wish to retain at all costs (your DNA) is important for framing the ideation workshop.

Aim for disruption – You should set the bar high in ideation sessions. Aiming for the identification of ideas and initiatives that create new markets or invade existing markets by better satisfying future customer needs in the near term is a good target to aim for. However, we find that falling just short of this is still likely to produce initiatives that could achieve significant market share gains.

Let people 'brain dump' – Provide participants with the opportunity to download all of their current thinking early on in the workshop before using more structured ideation approaches to extend participants' thinking. Without getting these ideas out, it is near impossible to engage participants in structured divergent thinking techniques.

Ideation requires time and space – We provide participants with the opportunity to work in silence or in pairs, at their own pace and generate and put forward ideas in a way that they are not immediately evaluated or 'shot down'. This allows people to move at their own pace between thinking about, writing down and evaluating their ideas. It also ensures that the talkative few do not dominate.

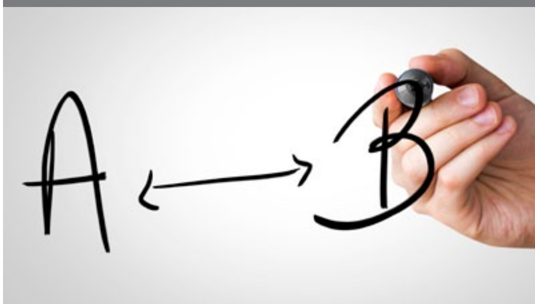
Determine clear next steps for the priority ideas – The participants in the ideation workshop will have gone on a journey together. While they are in this headspace, it is important to channel their thinking into the key questions and sources of information that will help to validate each prospective idea. Determining resourcing and a time frame for undertaking the validation process is also important.

An ideation workshop is a proven approach to starting on a journey of finding new ways of doing things. It starts with the identification of a major 'pain point' and enlists your organisation's best thinkers to determine options on the way forward.

These workshops, aimed at future horizon thinking, should form part of the toolkit of all innovative leaders. A well run ideation session helps organisations to identify potential solutions. It can also lead to a re-prioritisation of initiatives if more prospective ideas are identified. Other items for the innovation toolkit include the leader's innovation philosophy; a conducive work environment; and techniques to incorporate innovation into the day-to-day.

In 2014, Bill Taylor, co-founder of Fast Company, observed that 'Innovation is rewarded but execution is worshipped'. Keep in mind that going down the path of holding ideation workshops requires a broader commitment to validating, developing and executing the compelling ideas identified. After all, it is in the successful execution of the most prospective ideas that significant value for the business is created.

'Innovation is rewarded but execution is worshipped'



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preparing for the vision discussion

by debbie williams & zoe pappas

Right thinking

Asking clients to articulate the change they want to see in the world and the distinctive role they will play in creating that change brings a vision discussion back to what really matters and leads to outcomes that teams feel passionate about.

But how do you get started on vision discussions?

Leaders need to be cognisant that their perspective of the organisation may be very different to that of other stakeholders.

Gaining broad input – through, for example, case studies, customer insights and staff engagement – can help stimulate your thinking.

In the December 2015 edition of Right Lane Review we described our approach to creating compelling company statements (Levy & Pappas 2015). With our social sector clients, rather than asking them to describe their vision, we like to ask them to articulate the change they want to see in the world and the distinctive role they will play in creating that change. We've found that this approach brings a vision discussion back to what really matters and leads to outcomes that they feel passionate about.

However, many boards and executive teams feel uncertain about where to start the process.

One good starting point is understanding who should be involved. Will the executive alone develop a recommendation to take to the board, or will it be a collaborative process? Will the whole leadership team be involved at every step or are we comfortable with ideas being progressed by a working group? Should we consult more broadly or should this be a 'captain's call'?

We suggest getting broad input at the start of the process, taking the board and leadership team on the journey together, but being clear as to who will ultimately decide on the vision once a broad consensus has been reached.

Leaders need to be cognisant that their perspective of the organisation may be very different to that of other stakeholders. Getting input from staff, customers and others can be very useful in informing the discussion.

Right Lane uses five techniques to kick start vision discussions and stimulate new ideas.

1. Reflections from our 'founding fathers'

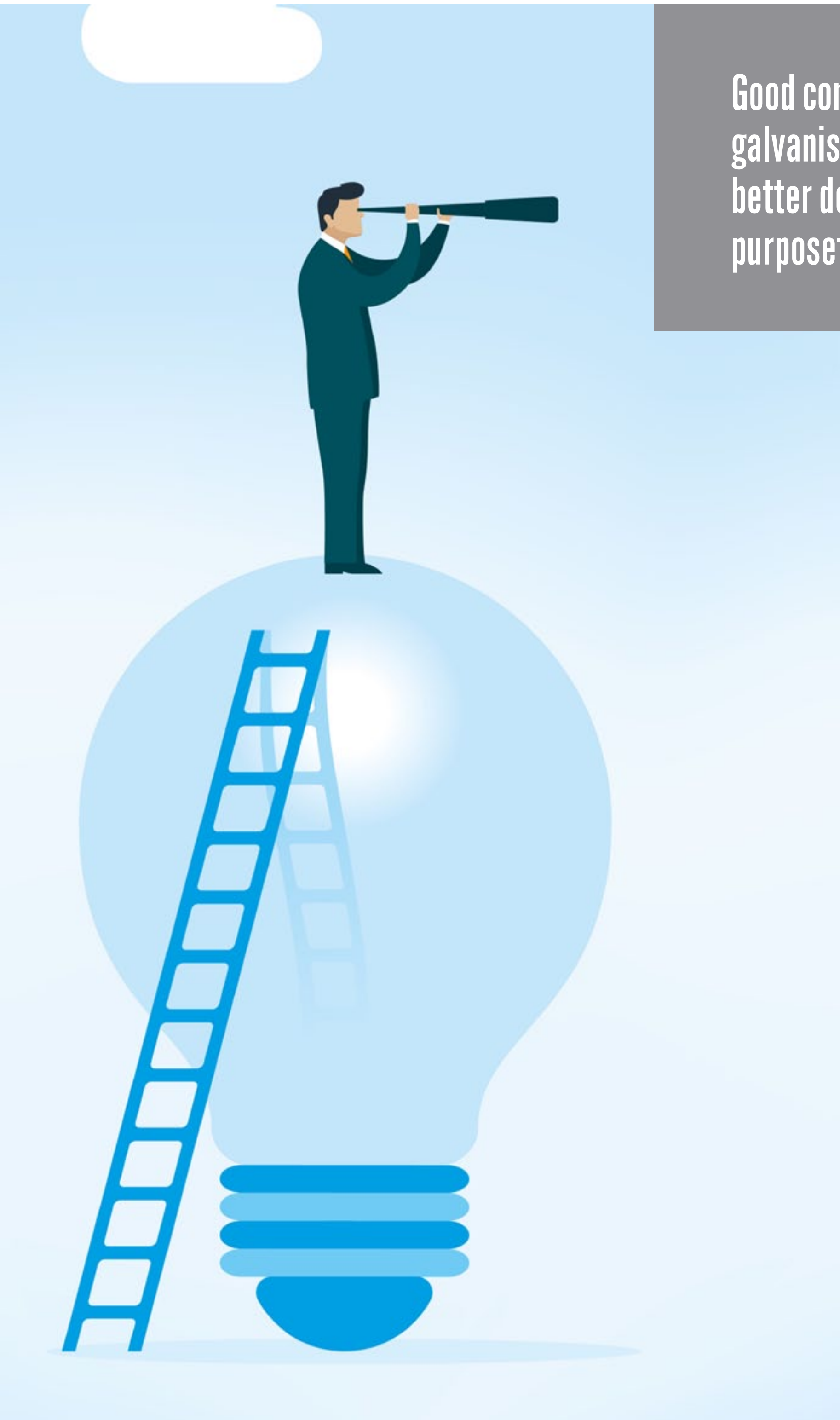
Conduct interviews or review documents to gain insights and reflections as to why your organisation was started in the first place. How has the organisation changed over the years? What aspects have remained consistent? If possible, video the 'founding fathers' to bring to life the passion that surrounded the founding of the organisation.

2. Online surveys

Conduct a survey of the board and executive team to understand how your leaders think about your organisation. Performing the survey online allows everybody to share their thoughts independently of the influence of others. Questions could include: What do you think your organisation does well? Why does your organisation exist? What do we really care about?

3. Vox pop videos

Film staff as they arrive in the morning and get off the cuff responses. What gets you out of bed in the morning to come to work? Who is your organisation? What do you think your organisation does well? This can easily be recorded on a smart phone and curated with free editing software.



Good company statements are not only galvanising, they support alignment, better decision making and more purposeful action.

4. Case studies of excellence

Develop case studies of similar organisations that are excelling in living their vision and being true to their core purpose. Try to go beyond the corporate statements to interviews with the leaders of these organisations to get to the heart of their success.

5. Customer insights

Interview your customers to identify their purpose – what drives them to do what they do? Ask them what they value about your organisation and why? Talk to front line staff and understand their perspectives on customer motivations.

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In the last few months Right Lane has seen a groundswell of organisations coming to us to assist in developing their vision or purpose statements.

Discussions about company statements can go awry, but with someone who knows what they're doing leading the effort, careful preparation, and sufficient time and effort invested in the process, they can be energising for an organisation. Good company statements are not only galvanising, they support alignment, better decision making and more purposeful action.

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want to know more?

If you would like Right Lane to help you develop your company statements, contact **Debbie Williams:**

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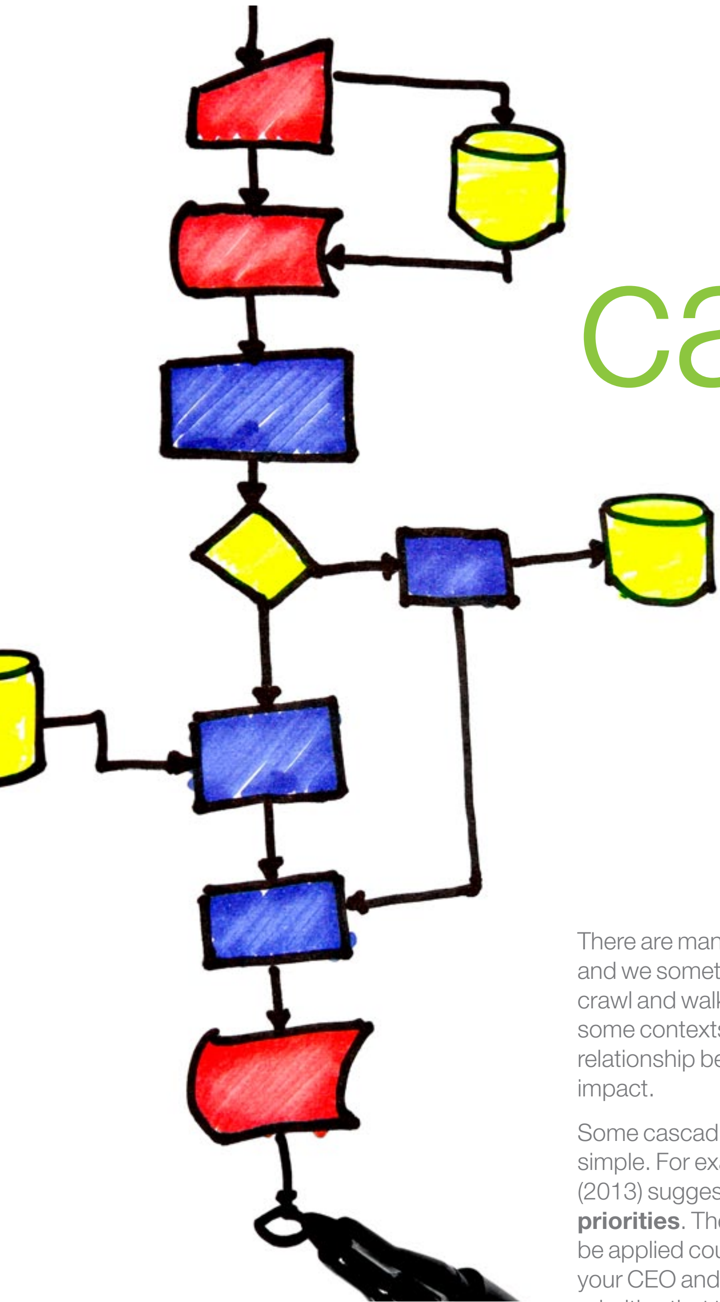


cascading strategy – options for alignment

by marc levy

Right thinking

Cascading managers' strategies is a useful exercise to promote alignment, but there are many approaches and no dominant paradigm for doing it.

We recommend approaching cascading in a stepwise fashion; keeping it simple; and building interrelated logic, systems and processes over time as the value becomes evident and the organisation's appetite for alignment grows.

There are many options for cascading and we sometimes encourage clients to crawl and walk before they can run; in some contexts there may be an inverse relationship between complexity and impact.

Some cascading methods are very simple. For example, Peter Bregman (2013) suggests cascading managers' **priorities**. The way this method can be applied couldn't be simpler: you ask your CEO and senior team to list the five priorities that they think should occupy 95% of their time (everything else should be done in the remaining 5%); you record everyone's priorities; you stick them up on a wall in a hierarchy, with the CEO's on top, direct reports on the next line and so on. Then you review the hierarchy. No one's helping the CEO with her number four. Exec manager one and exec manager two have the same priority and only one of them should. Really, is that one of your five? And so it goes. This can be an extremely useful exercise to promote alignment, but an obvious challenge to it is that it is input- rather than outcome-driven.

World famous strategy execution thinkers Robert Kaplan and David Norton (2008) suggest cascading strategy maps that might be comprised of 20 or 30 **objectives**, some of which could be obligatory and others optional or malleable at the business unit level. For example, the learning and growth objectives in their maps, some of which relate to people and culture, may be required objectives; but customer related objectives, which could differ down through different teams, can be moulded within certain parameters to suit specific market circumstances. This makes sense, but decision making relating to what to cascade and how to cascade it can be challenging and imprecise.

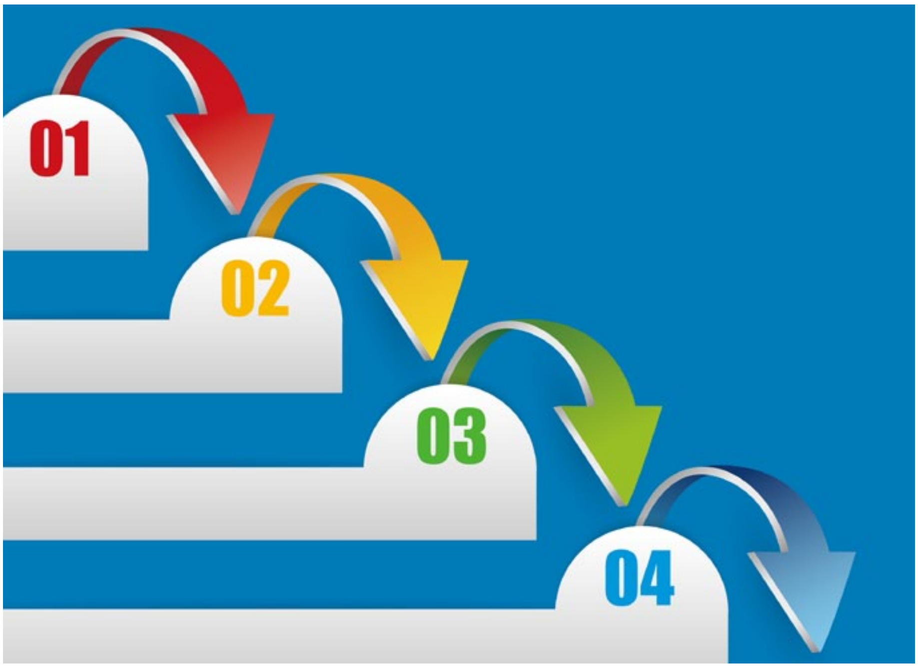
Cascading strategy is a fraught topic. Almost everyone with an interest in the subject will tell you that alignment is central to the success of any strategy; but it's hard work and, compared with other elements of the strategy canvass, it can be interminably dull and procedural.

Cascading **measures** (specific concrete performance indicators you can put a number against) may be the hardest of the simple, one dimensional cascades. There may be team measures derived from the corporate strategy that are sufficiently adaptable and 'cascadable' to be widely adopted down through the organisation, even into individuals' performance development plans: measures of financial and operational performance (revenue, cost and productivity); customer metrics like customer satisfaction or net promoter scores; people measures like unwanted turnover. It is certainly possible to cascade scores on climate and engagement surveys, although infrequent data militates against regular performance monitoring. Cascading measures is a technical business: measures and corresponding targets can be hard to define and in our experience many organisations don't commit to ensuring that measures and targets are accurate, additive and accretive.

Then there's more complex **multifactorial cascades**, which tend to be template-driven, often via strategic planning software, but still frequently by lower tech means. One such method is Roger Martin's OGSM (Lafley & Martin 2013). Many readers will be familiar with his strategic questions, which we sometimes use in our work: What are our aspirations? Where will we choose to play and not play? How will we win? What capabilities will we need? What management systems are necessary to support the strategy? Martin suggests a version of these questions for the cascade via a template that goes to objectives, goals, strategies and measures, the OGSM.

We've used a similar template with clients covering goals and attendant measures, strategic priorities and two classical strategy questions used by Martin: where will we compete, specifically, and how will we be distinctive. Our version avoids confusion between objectives and goals and relates measures specifically to objectives.

Multifactorial cascades like these can be



effective in aligning organisations around strategies, but they can be convoluted and involved, and they are difficult to employ well. Doing so requires an active input and coaching dialogue between managers throughout the organisation, thoroughness and attention to detail, and very strong measurement, monitoring and review disciplines.

An effective cascade can make a big difference in strategy execution. Like nearly everything in business, senior managers need to make it a priority, and spend the necessary time on it, if they want to get it right. We suggest approaching the cascade in a stepwise fashion. Keep it simple at first and build the interrelated logic, systems and processes over time as the value becomes evident and the organisation's appetite for alignment grows.

Cascading measures is a technical business: measures and corresponding targets can be hard to define and in our experience organisations frequently don't commit to ensuring that measures and targets are accurate, additive and accretive.

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want to know more?

If you would like Right Lane to help you cascade your strategy, contact **Marc Levy:**

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About Right Lane

Right Lane is a flourishing, top quality, ethical management consulting firm.

We employ our distinctive ideas and processes, and our absolute commitment to delivery, to help clients we care about pursue their inspiring missions.

We work alongside clients who do great work within the sectors they operate, and we are excited to be involved in creating outcomes that truly make a difference.

We are an ethical consulting firm with a strong belief in the work we do, and with a passion to give back to the broader community with the skills and expertise available within our walls.

Right Lane was established in 1997 to help private, not for profit and public sector clients to clarify and accelerate their future plans. Over the past 17 years, we have helped the executive teams and boards of more than 100 organisations to define and adapt their direction and strategy, identify and clarify their priorities, align their efforts with their aspirations, get their major projects started and finished, and measure and improve their performance.

Our areas of focus

- Developing and managing strategy and planning processes for clients
- Leading strategic growth projects, such as pre-merger analysis, pricing, new product feasibility, marketing expenditure effectiveness and growth options evaluation
- Implementing strategy through aligning and engaging the organisation, and measuring and monitoring performance
- Assisting clients with governance projects – from board culture and capabilities to board appraisals and reviews

B Corp certified - what does it mean?

In 2015 Right Lane became Australia's first B Corp certified strategy consulting firm.

This follows Right Lane's decision in 2011 to adopt 'for benefit' principles, including reasonable returns, inclusive ownership, stakeholder governance, transparency, and social and environmental responsibility. Capping our return on shareholder funds at reasonable levels, rather than seeking to maximise financial returns, has allowed our firm to pursue our purpose to contribute to a better society by helping organisations that do good, do better.

B Corporations are a new kind of company that uses the power of business to solve social and environmental problems. Certified B Corporations meet higher standards of social and environmental performance, transparency, and accountability. The performance standards measure a company's impact on all its stakeholders, including workers, suppliers, community, and the environment. It's like Fair Trade certification but for the whole business.

Certified B Corporation