

Better Strategy, Better Results: *Benefits of a re-engineered strategic planning process*

A recent survey conducted by the Macquarie Graduate School of Management revealed considerable insight into the practice of strategic management in Australia. Findings from the survey concluded that a high 77% use 'away days' as a means to discuss and/or decide strategy. Although 66% of attendees agreed that on the whole, the 'away days' were a success, a less positive outcome was that;

only 19% thought that the outcome (from the 'Away Day') would deliver a considerable change in the strategic direction of the organisation.

This finding confirms HC+P's long held belief that although essential, the strategic planning process on many occasions tends to contribute very little to a robust and effective strategic outcome. In addressing this issue, HC+P has reengineered the strategic planning process. Through our fully integrated **Strategic Management Framework** our approach is designed to deliver results, illustrated as follows:

Typical output from traditional 'Planning Process'	Output from Integrated Strategic Management Framework
• Foundation for next years 'planning cycle'	• Foundation for the future
• Planning document nestled in top drawer	• Visible, communicable strategy execution 'Dash Boards'
• Inconcise analysis of strengths and weaknesses	• Identification and understanding of 'gaps' in strategy
• Good ideas scratched across 'butchers paper'	• Strategy with clear 'Pathway to Implementation'
• Silo based view of 'my patch'	• Enterprise wide knowledge: Strategic Objectives
• Commitment to reconvene 'next year'	• Commitment to strategic goals and objectives

Our re-engineered process doesn't eliminate 'away days'. Rather, we give it a different emphasis to ensure better strategy and better results are achieved. The more positive outcome is delivered through:

- **Redesigned process:** Use of strategy formulation mechanism (Strategic Architecture) that links strategy formulation with execution (**Pathway to Implementation**).
- **Immediate identification of 'Gaps' in strategy:** Use of cause and effect analysis readily illustrated in the Strategic Architecture.
- **Greater input and rigour 'up front':** (another survey finding: **57% of respondees consider that attendees give no or minimal preparation to the strategic planning 'Away Day'**).
- **Alignment:** Enterprise wide visibility and monitoring of **agreed** (implementable) strategy.
- **Automated solution:** foundation for future 'dashboard' monitoring mechanism.

Case Study: In a recent project, it was observed that the previous years strategic plan had delivered confusing messages, imprecise and vague objectives and no method of implementation. In contrast HC+P's 'facilitated' approach delivered richer content, clear and concise objectives, measurable results and a clearly defined 'pathway to implementation'. From a process perspective, it was developed in half the time, delivered twice the certainty and provided far greater focus for those involved.

Getting Started: Most organisations have a foundation 'strategic 'plan'. The starting point for our process will vary therefore, from one organisation to another. Issues to consider in the process include:

- Where do we stand? Conduct Strategic Audit or apply 'Strategic Maturity' assessment model
- What does our Strategic Architecture look like?
- What is our mix of skills and personalities that we bring to the strategy 'team' environment?
- How good is our strategic measurement, management, monitoring and reporting mechanism?

Can we help? We will be delighted to talk: hcandp@hcandp.com; (03) 9863 8980; www.hcandp.com.