



Achieving radical and sustainable improvement in top line performance

Why Strategy Buy-In?

"We don't have a strategy, or if we do no one has told me what it is."

"When I ask a C-level exec to explain the company's strategy, I get a different answer depending on who I ask."

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The Challenge:

At the conclusion of a Strategic Planning Conference the question that always comes up is, "Now that we finally have a strategy, how do we communicate it to the rest of the organization to achieve buy-in?" Recognizing that the half-life (the amount of time for the planning team to forget 50% of what they learned) can in some cases be as short as a few days or weeks requires a deliberate communication plan to share key elements. Assuming the organization will hear about it in due time is a serious mistake. You just can't dictate results. Without buy-in, associates will resist and even try to stop the implementation and execution of critical projects and programs. After all, without buy-in you have not really convinced anyone that it is in their interest to participate. How do we do this?

The Approach:



"Public sentiment is everything. With it, nothing can fail. Without it, nothing can succeed."
...Abraham Lincoln
16th US President



"Successful organization, including the military have learned that the higher the risk the more necessary it is to engage everyone's commitment and intelligence."
...Margaret J. Wheatley

Buy-in is the process of gaining your associates understanding, commitment, and action in support of your strategy. Below are three ways to achieve this:

- 1. Rapid Communication:** The longer you wait to broadcast the results of your offsite, the more suspicious and uneasy your associates will become. The leak of any information via the back channel at the water cooler only serves as a distraction. We suggest that a subset of the few critical ideas and decisions be broadcast by the CEO or the appropriate in charge C-level exec as soon as possible (days or weeks vs. months). Keep in mind that due to proprietary and competitive information there may be limitations on how much you can share in great detail. However, providing and understanding of the big picture will pay back in the willingness and alignment of the larger team to get on board.
- 2. Use Stories:** The best way to achieve buy-in is to use strategic stories of a positive future. In other words, design, target and deliver a strategic story that projects a positive future that involves the listener. Everyone wants to know whats in it for them (good or bad). The story should address their agendas and describe how this will affect them and in broad terms what we want them to start doing and stop doing. For example: Painting a picture of a positive future that is increasing sales and decreasing costs will bring the company new job opportunities, higher pay or continued employment in a competitive market. Only if you empower employees to get involved in this strategy execution phase can you truly realize the goals that you have set.
- 3. Refresh and Reinforce:** Buy-in is an ongoing process and requires an investment in regular communication. Taking the time to regularly communicate, educate and involve associates in your new strategy that's poised to move forward makes people feel valuable and a part of the company's growth. Without reinforcement the strategy becomes another "strategy du'jour," the strategy of the day or week creating a "this too shall pass" attitude. This is where the entire C-level must be engaged and walk the talk, charting the progress and impact the strategy is having on each of their functions. Consistency and discipline in regular communication and updates leverages trust beyond the C suite and reinforces the galvanized commitment to making the strategy happen.

So What?

In a recent study by Booz & Company, 53% of the respondents don't feel their company's strategy will lead to success and 2/3 said their company's internal capabilities do not fully support the company's strategy



"Communications dominate war; broadly considered, they are the most important single element in strategy, political or military."
...Alfred T. Mahan

and the way in creates value in the market. Don't become part of these statistics. Do not underestimate the investment of time required to achieve strategy buy-in.

If you have any questions on how you can improve your strategy buy-in, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at 973-720-0020 or kappainfo@kappaeast.com.

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