

Welcome to the 3Q18 Desai Management Consulting newsletter.



## Desai Management Consulting - 3Q18 Newsletter

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### Enjoying Summer...

We all generally take summer vacations. Sometimes the trips blend into each other - again we visit the seashore, or the theme park, or..... This year, for myself and family, it was strikingly different.

We held a family gathering in Alberta, Canada, visiting the beautiful nature areas found in Banff National Park. I have visited many parts of the world, and yet the seemingly endless views of nature undisturbed were absolutely striking. Canadians should be very proud of this natural heritage, and especially how it is cared for and maintained. I understand the area to be quite old as a tourist destination, and yet it remains one of the most pristine places I have ever beheld. Even overlooking the city of Banff itself, natural beauty extends in every direction as far as you can see:



It's as if each day one awakens to the world starting over again. I strongly encourage you to consider visiting! I hope your family has been able to enjoy this slightly overheated summer here in Vermont, or wherever you may have traveled.

Our Takeaway this month demonstrates the value of both short- and long-term thinking. Banff National Park is a perfect illustration. The Canadian Government's goal for all national parks and historic sights is "...to ensure that Canadians form a lasting connection to this heritage and that our protected places are enjoyed in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations." Daily projects and tasks are necessary now and always to achieve that strategic goal.

As always I thank [our customers](#), as they continue to help us grow and polish our expertise and our delivery of value to all. I also thank [our team members](#) for their ongoing role in our success. In 2018 and beyond, we continue to add and deploy experienced skills in project and business process management and operational leadership. ***Working together we can endlessly focus on how to add customer value in every engagement.***

For customers to be successful in implementing projects, those investments must be well thought-out, and part of an integrated view of the customer's strategy. Doing so ensures a singular vision and direction for all, with consistent priorities and decision-making. This quarter's Business Solution looks at some of the benefits of Strategy Planning and Implementation, as an aid to both short- and long-term business success. I hope you find it of value.

Thank you for your support!

**Vijay Desai, Managing Partner**

## Business Solution

### Your Strategy - a Plan, an Implementation, or Both?

Many organizations fail to invest in developing a Strategic Plan. At the business level, this can result in a lack of preparedness for fundamental changes, losing valuable lead time and ability to combat them when they occur.

What is equally important is the impact on Programs and

The art and science of Strategy Planning has evolved in recent years to an understanding that a strategy plan is worthless without a corresponding strategy implementation - the coordinated set of Programs and Projects structured to enact the elements of the Strategic Plan. Projects when a strategy is missing or ill-defined.



While individual projects may survive as islands, the enterprise risks great impacts in cost, time, risk and coordination if they fail to produce a strategy plan, and use it as the basis for investments in Programs and Projects. Deriving an implementation plan from a strategic plan leaves the business postured for success because:

- Focus is placed on the important things. Resources (time, talent, money) are properly allocated to those activities that provide the most benefit.
- Staff recognize the impact the changing business environment is having on the company and affect the needed changes in direction.
- Executives and staff develop a frame of reference for budgets and short-range operating plans.

Tying this to program and project management disciplines helps reinforce the value of PMP constructs such as the Charter, where business strategy crosses the boundaries to execution. Inputs grounded in a strategic plan will help provide an accurate context and prioritization for business investments. Programs and projects chosen in this manner, and implemented with project management disciplines helps ensure long-term business success, and lays a foundation for strategic portfolio management for all investments.

Please [contact us](#) if you'd like to learn more about the strategy planning and implementation processes.

**Nishith Thakkar - Consultant of the Quarter**



Desai is proud to announce its Consultant of the Quarter for 3Q18. This is a member of our team who illustrates through hard work the flexibility, values and strengths the Desai team is famous for. For 3Q, the honor goes to **Nishith Thakkar**. Nishith is a relatively new member to Desai, yet brings a strong and inquisitive "how can I help?" nature to his work. His customer is thrilled with the current results and already sees sufficient potential to expand Nishith's responsibilities. Congratulations to Nish!

## Latest News and Events

- The Desai team enjoyed an evening dinner cruise aboard the Spirit of Ethan Allen III, as part of their attendance at the Vermont Technology Alliance Sunset Dinner Cruise, held August 23rd.



- Desai co-sponsored the PMI Champlain Valley Dinner meeting (80 plus participants) on Sept 11th at the Trader Duke Hotel. The event speaker was Michael Sir who shared his great experience about "How to Influence Without Authority".



- Desai (in partnership with PMI Champlain Valley) will be offering the next [PMI-ACP Certification Test Prep Bootcamp](#) on September 20-21, 2018
- Desai (in partnership with PMI Champlain Valley) will be offering the next [PMI-PMP Certification Test Prep Bootcamp](#) on October 24-26, 2018.

## How to Excel at Both Strategy and Execution

(extracted from Paul Leinwand and Joachim Rotering, from HBR Leadership Development)

Leaders who master both strategy and execution start by building a bold but executable strategy. Next, they ensure that the company is investing behind the change. And last, they make sure the entire organization is motivated to go the journey.

Developing a bold but executable strategy starts with making sure leaders have addressed the questions of "What are we great at?" and "What are we able to achieve?" rather than coming up with lofty plans and asking functional and business-unit teams to do their best to execute. Indeed, they spell out the few differentiating capabilities that the company must excel at to realize the strategy.

Ensuring that the company is investing behind the change means that leaders recognize that the budget process is one of the most important tools in closing the strategy-to-execution gap. Cost isn't an exogenous variable to be managed-it is the investment in doing the most important things well. But rarely are budgets linked closely to the strategy. If your company is merely incrementalizing the budget up or down by a few percentage points, ask yourself whether the investments are really reflective of the most important tasks.

Motivating individuals is a hugely underleveraged tool to close the gap between strategy and execution. Great leaders know that success stems from specific skills that come together in unique ways to do the challenging tasks in executing the strategy. But today

most employees don't even understand how they are connected to the strategy. In a recent (not-yet-published) survey of 540 executives, managers, and non-managers by Strategy&, only 28% of employees said that they feel fully connected to the purpose and identity of their organization. Articulating the strategy in human terms-what capabilities the company will need to build, and what skills are required to do so-not only helps the company focus on how to develop the right talent, but it allows individuals to understand how their role fits into the overall strategy, and allows them to see their work in a much more fundamentally connected way.

How are you doing in combining strategy and execution? Below are some questions for you to think through that cover all three stages of the strategy-to-execution continuum. Getting these three areas right allows leaders to make a big step forward toward closing the gap between strategy and execution:

### **1) Build the strategy**

- Are you very clear about how you add value to customers in a way that others don't, and about the specific capabilities that enable you to excel at that value proposition?
- As strategies are being developed, are you using the classic approach of "build the strategy, then think about execution," or are you asking yourself the question, "Do you have the capabilities needed-or can you build the capabilities needed-to execute the strategy?"
- As you're dealing with disruption, are you shaping the world around you with your given strengths, or are you waiting for change to happen, and therefore playing by someone else's rules?

### **2) Translate the strategy into the everyday**

- Are you diligently following through on what you have decided? You need to be very clear about what the strategy is and what it takes to succeed-and to communicate it so that everyone in the organization understands what they should be doing.
- Are there visible programs (for example specific new technologies, new processes, or training programs) to build the key capabilities your organization needs to win with its strategy?
- Are you building specific connections between strategy and the budgeting process so you're reallocating funds to where they matter most? And do you have mechanisms in place that translate the strategy into personal goals and rewards for managers and employees?

### **3) Execute the strategy**

- Are you motivating employees every single day to understand how what they're doing connects to the important strategic levers that you have focused on?Are you enabling employees to work together across organizational silos to tackle the cross-functional challenges that allow the company to win?
- Are you keeping track not just of your performance, but of how you're building and scaling up those few key capabilities that enable you to create value for customers in ways that others cannot?
- Is your management team engaged in how you are executing the strategy-not just by measuring results, but by constantly challenging the organization and supporting it in improving its key capabilities?
- Are you setting your team's sights high enough for what they need to accomplish, and by when?

## **THE TAKEAWAY**

We believe there's a tremendous upside for companies that can succeed at strategy through execution. The leaders who are able to be both visionaries and operators, and switch between these two mindsets, are the ones who can turn their organizations into super-competitors.

*"However beautiful the strategy, occasionally you should look at the results."* - Winston Churchill

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