



## Desai Management Consulting - 4Q20 Newsletter

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### Winter Arrives / Happy Holidays!

White weather approaches once again, and our thoughts turn to the holiday season. Reflecting on the year 2020 brings mixed emotions. Through them all, I am very thankful for our partnerships, customers, and most importantly our team.

We know and share many of the struggles businesses are facing, especially the timing and nature of "recovery", and what the future will be like. We are working hard to ensure our services can bring immediate value as business activity resumes.

This quarter we offer a look at Strategy Planning. Once companies open their doors again, many will want or need to revalidate their strategic directions. Equally important, once a strategy is formed, concrete plans to implement are an absolute necessity.

Our "Takeaway" this quarter is a look at some examples of business and life learning from the sport of tennis. As always, Desai Team stands ready to help, and to accelerate the recovery process with our experience and expertise, and our focus on business problems to solve, and their associated value.

In closing, I would like to suggest different ideas for coping, not only through the holidays, but from all the chaos of the year:

- Think of ways to connect with loved ones that keep everyone safe, and plan those events in advance. This could include sharing a meal over video chat, or chatting on the phone.
- Find parts of routines or rituals that can stay the same or be slightly modified. Routine is important for fighting feelings of being unsettled.
- Practice self care: Get enough sleep, exercise, eat three meals per day and connect with local resources if extra support is needed.



- Find ways to mitigate stress in small ways. This could include watching a movie and meeting online afterwards to discuss it with friends.

Seasons greetings, and best wishes for safe and healthy holidays.

Thank you!

**Vijay Desai, Managing Partner**

## **A3 Strategy Development & Deployment (A3S)**

A3S is a periodic planning tool that sets a company's goals and targets, then develops a month-to-month deployment plan to get there. Documentation is on one A3-size page (11" x 17"), which customers can think of as their company's strategy execution plan. This plan shows where the customer is today (What's actually happening), where they want to go (What should be happening - their strategic purpose) and, ultimately, a planned route to get there.

This strategic purpose, or "true north," is the magnetic pull or business direction defined by senior leadership to achieve business objectives, such as a competitive advantage, customer value creation, profitability, etc. Simplified, this road map guides the customer to:

- Set Direction: It defines the customer's true north, or the basic business needs that must be met. This represents the very reasons the company is in business. Achieving these business goals is the sole purpose of Strategy Deployment.
- Determine the Gap: Customers must know exactly where they stand if they're going plot a course to their destination. They should reflect on past success, as well as those actions that failed to live up to expectations. They should ask themselves the hard questions, like "How close are we to achieving our business needs?"
- Set Goals to Close the Gap: The customer's goals must be in line with their true north. Desai's disciplined approach will ensure that the customer constructs SMARTER goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely, Evaluated, and Re-evaluated.
- Create Specific Action Plans to Achieve the Goals: These are all the individual steps that the customer will take to achieve the goals. Each plan will have identified owners, teams, and start/end dates. Most importantly, Desai's methods bring a relentless approach to successful plan execution through the iterative use of the Plan-Do-Check-Act discipline. This keeps plan status visible to leadership and promotes continuous improvement.

Below is a sample A3 template for Strategy Development and Deployment. Note the defined elements, the orderly sequence of events, and the fact that all pertinent information is immediately visible.

Strategy Name Customer 2021 Strategy A3	Strategy Focus 2021 Goals	 <b>A3 Flow</b>	Deployment Leader Josh JR, Mike, Carl																				
Start Date January 14, 2021	Revision Date January 21, 2021		Deployment Team Chris																				
2021 Goals			Facilitator Chris																				
Strategy : <i>Customer's strategic mission description, used as definition of 'true north', to provide constant for direction, decision-making and prioritization</i> Customer Strategic Goal Description of Goal and desired completion date.		<b>This Year's Action Plan</b> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Goal</th> <th>Projects</th> <th>Owner</th> <th>Assistance</th> <th>Start Date</th> <th>End Date</th> <th>Status</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Strategic Goal #1 description</td> <td>Project A</td> <td>Chris</td> <td>Mike</td> <td>1/21/21</td> <td>1/31/21</td> <td style="background-color: yellow;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Project B</td> <td>Vijay</td> <td>Mike, Josh, JR, Carl, Chris</td> <td>1/14/21</td> <td>4Q21 Meeting</td> <td style="background-color: green;"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Goal	Projects	Owner	Assistance	Start Date	End Date	Status	Strategic Goal #1 description	Project A	Chris	Mike	1/21/21	1/31/21		Project B	Vijay	Mike, Josh, JR, Carl, Chris	1/14/21	4Q21 Meeting	
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<b>2020 Reflections</b> Successes: List 2020 activities that met expectations and/or measurements for deliverables.  <i>These lists provide the Strengths vs. Weaknesses input to target 2021 action plan content.</i>		Fell Short: List 2020 activities that either did not complete or did not meet expectations and/or measurements for deliverables.  <i>Projects to achieve Goals are anchored in 'Plan-Do-Check-Act' Cycle for ongoing visibility and to drive to successful completion</i>																					
<b>Analysis / Justification for Future Activity</b> We need: • _____ therefore we must _____ • _____ therefore we must _____  <i>This analysis provides the necessary justification for the 2021 action plan content.</i>		<b>Follow-up on Unresolved Issues</b> <i>Identification and follow-up to address unresolved issues and manage dependencies.</i>																					
		<b>Team Recognition</b> <i>Identification of specific reward actions for when 2021 objectives are all met.</i>																					

This A3S solution produces a standard communication tool for customer teams to understand each other, enabling effective and efficient problem-solving, and building a bridge from strategy to execution.

Please [contact us](#) if you'd like to discuss these methods in greater detail.

***"Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory;  
Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat."  
- Sun Tzu -***

## Training

### 3-Day Certified SAFe® 5.0 Agilist (Leading SAFe)

Desai in partnership with [Conceptia](#) has scheduled an online instruction for becoming a [Certified SAFe® 5.0 Agilist \(Leading SAFe\)](#). Dates are 2/8 - 2/10/2021.

**Trainer: Steve Pinckney**

### 3-Day Certified SAFe® 5.0 Scrum Master

Desai in partnership with [Conceptia](#) has scheduled an online instruction for becoming a [Certified SAFe® 5.0 Scrum Master](#). Dates are 2/15 - 2/17/2021.

**Trainer: Steve Pinckney**

### 3-Day PMI - PMP Certification Test Prep Bootcamp

Desai in partnership with PMI Champlain [PMI Champlain Valley Chapter](#) has scheduled the next [PMI-PMP Certification Test Prep Bootcamp](#) on 3/24 - 3/26/21.

**Trainer: Dave Kearns**



## 2020 Donations

Throughout 2020, Desai donated to a number of organizations and causes:

- [Vermont Special Olympics](#)
- [Committee on Temporary Shelter \(COTS\)](#)
- [SpectrumClimate xChange](#)

- [Mentor VT](#)
- [Technology for Tomorrow](#)
- [Alzheimer's Association](#)
- [American Cancer Society](#)
- [American Diabetes Association](#)
- [Doctors Without Borders](#)



## [The Takeaway](#)

### Tennis, Anyone?

As we move through life, we sometimes find events and activities that represent, or model, real life experiences, often spanning the gap between business and personal life. For me, the sport of tennis which I recently start playing with my son, **Neel Desai** and very good friend **Shyam Parikh** who is my coach too. Thanks to both of them for putting up with me! I am truly grateful to them.



Many people have stumbled upon this similarity, and I'd like to share my top 3 findings, in the hope that you may see life more clearly, whether it be clarity in prior events, or outlines for future choices and opportunities. Here goes:

#### **Train Hard**

Professional athletes train hard. Many of them may have been born with tremendous athletic capabilities, but to make it in the big leagues, innate skill is not enough. They have to push themselves every day, usually for tens of thousands of hours. This mentality applies to the business world, as well. In an economy that is constantly evolving, with a globalized workforce that can heighten competition, we all need to be on top of your game to compete. Train the skills what we need to thrive often.

#### **Be Strategic**

It is difficult to play tennis aimlessly and win. Good players are strategic - they know the right angles to hit, which pace suits the angles, and the best positions for intercepting a return hit. Not only do they know these things, but they are ready to apply this knowledge to their game with amazing speed and accuracy. Successful business people exhibit similar know-how. They understand the ins and outs of their industry and how they fit into it. They deliver with strategy, and anticipate problems in the same fashion.

#### **Serve Well**

One of the more popular quotes about business and tennis, which appears in a variety of forms, underscores the importance of service. It advises: Business is like tennis; those who serve well, win. It is sound advice - good business is often borne out of an organization that serves, whether those who directly serve customers or those behind the scenes who serve an internal objective. One can also draw a second interpretation. When you serve in tennis, you have a lot of control over where the ball goes; you don't have to subdue the spontaneity of a bouncing ball, after all. Good players capitalize on that moment when the ball is firmly in their side of the court. From a business perspective, so should we. When the next play is in your hands, make the most of it.

***"Business is like tennis - those who serve well, win."***  
**- Kenneth Blanchard -**

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