

# The Strategic Planning Process

This paper presents a framework for strategic planning based on the approach used by Strategic Contact in our consulting projects. Discuss this approach with your team and define the steps you need to take to develop your strategy.

## The Importance of Strategy and Alignment

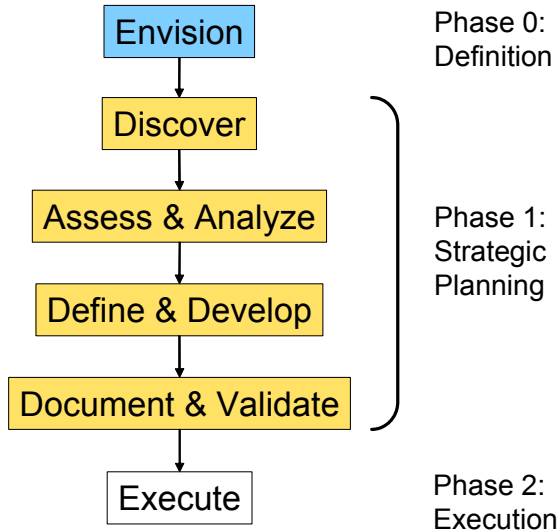
Now, more than ever, companies need to have a clear business strategy that defines who they are, and to have operations and technology strategies that translate the business strategy into action.

Have you defined your strategies? Do they align?

## Strategic Planning Framework

Strategic planning requires a clear methodology to succeed. Figure 1 provides a framework.

Figure 1: Strategic Planning Framework



## The Challenges

These are some of the key challenges in the strategic planning process:

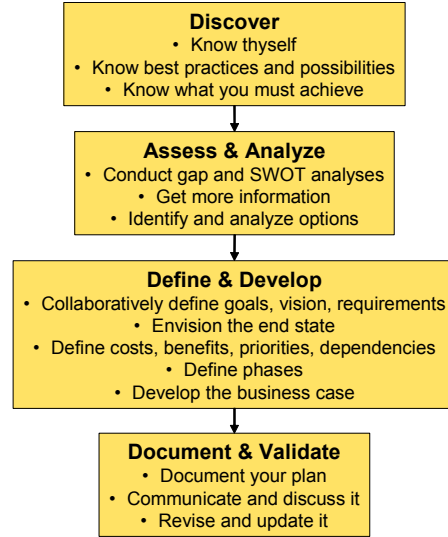
- ▲ The business strategy may need clarification first.
- ▲ Defining the scope is sometimes difficult.
  - Is it operations, technology, or both?
- ▲ It takes time, energy, and the right resources.
  - A strong, experienced leader is critical.
- ▲ It takes commitment at all levels.

Companies should address these challenges in the definition phase. Define the scope, goals, team, preliminary budget, and assumptions.

## The Strategic Planning Process

Phase 1 has four steps. Figure 2 depicts them in more detail.

Figure 2: Strategic Planning Steps



Do you have a clear methodology for conducting strategic planning? Will these steps, or some variation of them, help you succeed?

## Keys to Success

Based on our experience, here are some keys to conducting strategic planning successfully:

- ▲ Have a clear business strategy and commonly understood goals.
  - Use the strategic planning process as the catalyst to clarify vision and directions.
- ▲ Ensure solid leadership throughout the entire process, from planning through execution.
  - A senior-level sponsor (e.g., CxO) provides context and ensures resource commitment.
  - An experienced project leader/facilitator keeps the team moving forward together.
- ▲ Put together a cross-functional team that understands the company's needs, is energized and creative, and communicates and collaborates well.
  - Business operations, IT/Telecom, marketing, HR, and others should participate as needed.
  - Collectively, they should understand the technical possibilities and operational needs.
- ▲ Make the appropriate commitment of resources—time, staff, and budget—to ensure successful planning and execution.
  - Use outside resources as needed.

Developing a strategy can be challenging, but it is also rewarding. It is an invaluable and essential requirement for a successful business today.

Are you ready to make the resource commitments for effective strategic planning and execution?