



Managing Strategy for Real

Most organizations have a process for setting strategic direction and allocating resources. Yet, they may not spend enough time developing processes that execute these strategies and measure progress. Like other core business processes (budgeting, accounting, human capital management, etc.) managing strategy must be an integral part of running your business.

At M. Beacon Enterprises, we address this challenge by working with you to design Real Strategy in Action – a realistic way to manage your strategy.

Definition: Real Strategy in Action

Managing strategy for real enables executives to execute on key initiatives in a world of uncertainty. It's an approach that lets leaders actively focus on longer-term results while balancing the demands of daily operations. It's about moving away from annual strategic planning to ongoing strategic *management* – or Real Strategy in Action. Formal strategic planning occurs over longer intervals (not annually) or on an “event-triggered” basis. Managing ongoing strategy execution – the Real Strategy in Action process – sets a timeline, a decision framework, and trigger points that guide strategy and management action on an ongoing basis. Combining the two approaches results in greater flexibility to integrate new ideas, to learn, and to manage customer expectations in a more proactive, timely way.

Developing Real Strategy in Action:

The M. Beacon Enterprises engagement generally follows a four-step approach:

1. Assess the current strategic planning process
2. Identify the links required between current plan and process (in terms of future needs and lessons learned)
3. Define and map a review process for ongoing strategic management
4. Establish the governance and accountabilities for the process and key decisions

During this type of engagement, we usually consider questions such as:

- What does / does not work in our existing strategy process?
- Who owns this process? Who needs to be involved?
- What typically gets in the way of executing our strategy?
- What are the key decisions or events that could trigger a formal strategic review?
- What are the critical touch points between this process and other business processes?
- What else needs to change for this process to be successful? How will this process affect our culture and our “way of doing business”?

Organizational Assumptions:

- This presumes a current strategic plan and method with which leadership is intimately familiar
- Success depends on a clear decision framework and an understanding of the flow of information within the organization (who needs to know what, by when)
- Best results occur when key business leaders can devote specific attention to this effort

Results: Making Strategy Real

- A process for managing strategy that can be used by multiple levels in the organization
- Key ‘triggers’ or events to monitor so that you can adapt quickly to business changes
- Decision points and accountabilities (e.g. who takes the decision in a crisis?)
- A framework within which to place other operating activities, priorities, and initiatives, thus enhancing the link between strategy and execution