

THE WISDOM OF A ONE-PAGE STRATEGY

Why you should have one and why they work...

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Imagine spending your precious time developing a wonderful strategy that will help achieve your aspirations and then to find out that no one actually uses it! Have you ever heard yourself saying, “Well I’ve told them so many times and they just don’t seem to get it!” Probably followed up with a bit of reflection on how you should do it better. “But anyway back to the hamster wheel (Do, Do, Do, Do cycle) haven’t got time for that reflection stuff – got results to deliver. I’ll email it out again and mention it at the SMT meeting again.” Sound familiar?

Working with a wide range of organisations from many different sectors and different cultures has helped me realise there is a big problem out there! The problem with the typical strategic plan is that it is too complicated. It is usually wonderfully branded, with a great title, printed on posh paper or even card, has an extensive table of contents, is often many pages long, is in a three-ring binder with numerous tabs, and it frequently contains a lot of narrative, accompanied by an abundance of charts and graphs. It is designed to impress – and it often does.

I’m sure the team that developed it think it’s a job well done, it makes them feel fantastic and may be impressive, but it is hard to explain – even by your senior leaders. Added to that it’s probably very hard to remember and pass onto the rest of your business. The reason I think this happens is that we try to move too quickly from the conceptual level idea into detailed practical implementation, without thinking about how to communicate and embed the strategy and the thinking behind it.

I’m sure we have all been there! Because of the challenge and complexity it is seldom fully communicated effectively to the people who do the day-to-day work: your managers and supervisors, your front-line staff and your support team – the people who you lead and support to achieve the organisational success you are looking for.

What I’ve found is that teams and individuals in the organisation become disconnected and then work off their own agendas and value systems. Misalignment built into your organisational system in an instant. People fail to see how it impacts on them and what they should do on ‘Monday morning,’ so they keep doing the same old stuff. They fail to see how important it is, why they should do it and what they should be doing. Effective decision making becomes impossible, conflict increases, trust starts to disappear and the whole system starts to slow down, and it costs more to operate. Projects take longer to deliver and benefits longer to realise, results get harder and harder to deliver. And in the fast moving, ever changing, competitive business world we live in today - that’s not a good thing.

To make your strategy work, you need to re-frame it. You need to get your strategy down to a single page as a set of words, as a journey, as a picture. Keep it meaningful, intuitive and concise. The elements need to work together; they need to tell a story. And it all needs to be written and drawn in an easy, logical format that every employee in your organisation can understand, remember, embrace and reinforce.

To re-frame your strategy, you need to build a shared understanding of why you exist as an organisation, where you are going, and the most critical things you will focus on to get there. You will also need to help people understand the fundamentals of your business model, including your customer value proposition and how you will make money to fund future growth, and how they will be measured.

Of course having the one page is important, it's also important how you develop it. I've found that "inclusion = commitment." So make sure you select the right team, build trust and develop them, and use techniques that encourage dialogue such as graphical facilitation, world café processes, or open space technology. Use your customers as part of the team as well – and those people who don't buy from you - you can learn a lot from them!

All great business strategies can be summarised in a short headline. Easy to understand and communicate, they convey clarity internally and externally to the customer. Clarity is so important for good strategies that companies should make an effort to understand what it means and how to achieve it. Neuroscience can help us in this endeavour. Clarity, as several studies demonstrate, depends a lot on the Contrast Principle. We understand something better when we see it in comparison with something else than in isolation.

To understand the power of comparison, let me retell this famous old advertising story. One day, an advertising executive and a colleague were having lunch in New York's Central Park. On the way back, they saw a blind man begging for money. He had a cup for donations, and a sign read: "I am blind". Passers-by ignored him. The executive stopped and offered to alter the wording on his sign to increase the donations. He took out a marker pen and scribbled four words. Passers-by started stopping, and soon the cash poured in. What did he add? The sign now read: "It is spring and I am blind."

So you are probably wondering what you need to include in your one pager. Let's have a look at each element more closely. And remember this can be a picture as well as narrative.

CORE PURPOSE

You need to start by clarifying why you exist. In his best-selling book, *Good to Great*, Jim Collins says a Core Purpose is a statement that captures the soul of the organisation. It is your organisation's most fundamental reason for being. This is often defined as a promise – our promise, customer promise, people promise etc.

This short statement captures your organisations higher calling. At Successfactory™ our core purpose is "Awakening possibility in people to deliver extraordinary results." The Ing purpose statement is, "Empowering people to stay a step ahead in life and in business."

Work becomes much more than just making profit. It builds a shared feeling that we are all doing something special here. People get excited about making a difference. It is their motivation for coming to work each day – *they are there for a lot more than the money.*

THE TARGET (VISION)

People also need to understand where you are going – a one to three year vision. There needs to be a clear goal that represents the pinnacle of what you are trying to achieve. Collins calls this a BHAG (a big hairy audacious goal). In his words, "A true BHAG is clear and compelling, serves as a unifying point of effort and acts as a catalyst for team spirit. It has a clear finish line, so the organisation can know when it has achieved the goal. A BHAG engages people – it reaches out and grabs them. It is tangible, energising, highly focussed. People get it right away; it takes little to no explanation." O2's is "To have twice as many fans as our nearest competitor." B&Q's is "The Helpful Home Improvement Company."

It is important to make sure your team identifies with this and personally buys in to the target as their target. It should be a stretch. Because it is a stretch people have to start thinking about how to achieve it. Creativity improves, innovation starts to happen and your model of business is reworked and refreshed on a regular basis – keeping it current, alive, refreshing and with your teams wanting to make it happen. The stretch is part of the magic. To get there, you have to fundamentally revisit the way you

are running your business. That doesn't mean you need to change everything. It does mean you will probably need to make some changes to align the new business. What are you going to stop, start and continue doing?

HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THIS?

This is your strategic focus. As your strategy evolves it gives direction like a beacon of light. You can no longer do everything or every interesting idea you picked up from your last conference. Some things will fit ... many will not. You need to make sure you do nothing of no use.

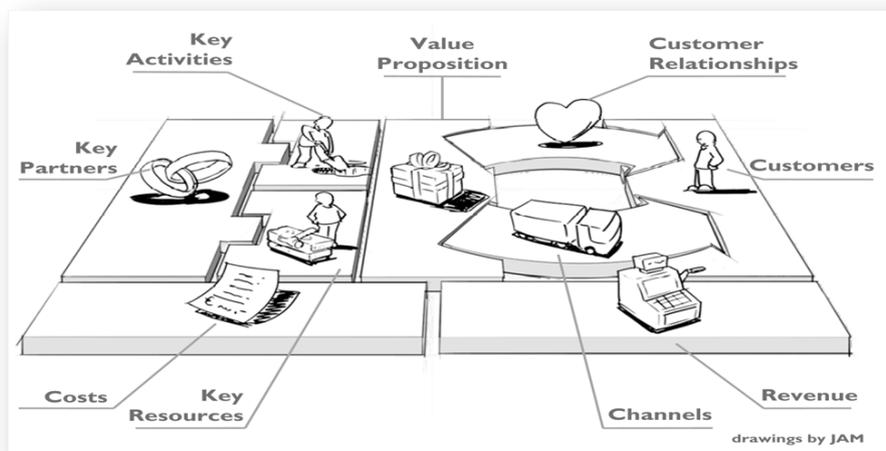
To reach your Target, Objective, or BHAG as quickly as possible, while staying aligned to your core purpose, you will need to concentrate on a few things: typically three or four areas of strategic focus. A few examples:

- The right people, with the right skills, and right attitudes in the right jobs – the people plan
- Improving internal systems, infrastructure and environment
- Build a WOW sales and service culture
- Building the brand – becoming “remarkable”
- Developing leaders and managers who can drive the business forward
- Building change maturity into the organisation
- Customer led innovation to products and services – building you way out of recession
- Working responsibly – the sustainable promise

If you have more than three or four areas of Strategic Focus you are trying to do too much. The focus is sometimes called the 'business model.' Some people call this 'the concept of the business.' Whatever it is called it defines two very important dimensions of your organisation:

- Your Customer Value Proposition
- How You Make Money (to fund future growth).

I like to use the Business Model Canvas when working with clients to formulate their propositions and how to deliver it. Visit www.businessmodelgeneration.com to find out more.



CUSTOMER VALUE PROPOSITION

Work with your team to answer a few simple questions:

1. **Why do people choose your business?** Why do they pick you over other companies? What's so special about what you have to offer? What are you famous for?
2. **Why do customers stay with you?** Once you have them in the door, what keeps them from taking their business elsewhere?
3. **Why do people not buy from you?** Who hates you or has not heard of you, and why?
4. **How are you building loyalty over the longer term?** How will you grow deeper relationships? How will you get your customers to refer you to their friends? How do you turn them into raving fans?

The answers to these questions then form the basis of crafting your promise. The outcome is fundamentally the promise you make to your customers which then sits in the heart of every decision made in the future, be it strategic or operational. What sort of people do we recruit, where is our capital expenditure going to be spent, what is our marketing strategy, what is the supply chain process, what is our sales model etc.

HOW DO WE MAKE MONEY?

What is your money making machine and is it understood by all? There needs to be a source of revenue to fund day-to-day operations as well as future growth. To help you achieve these goals, it is important that everyone understands where the money comes from. What grows the top line and enhances the bottom line. How do we measure success? What are the most important measures we would use in our dashboard to keep us on track and aide decision making? Make sure you keep it simple!!!

In conclusion, framing your strategy in a simple, memorable way makes it easy to communicate and easy to comprehend. It tells your story in a meaningful way. And it widens the circle of people who “get it.” This is fundamental to employee engagement – which builds the kind of motivation you see in high performance organisations. Your people want to make a difference. As a leader, you need to help make this happen.

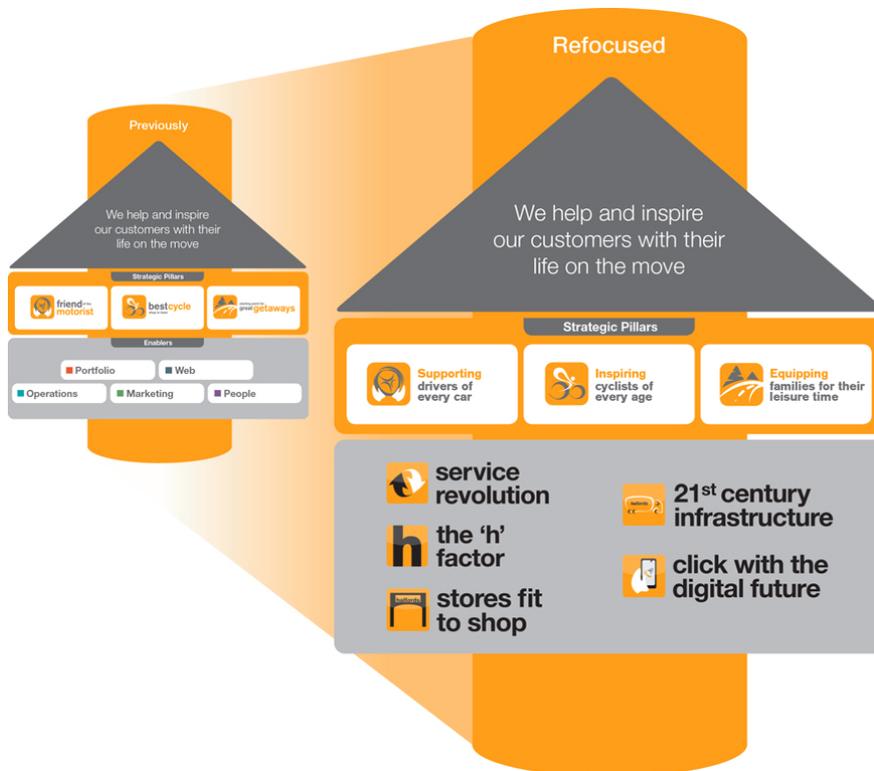
EXAMPLES



OUR AMBITION

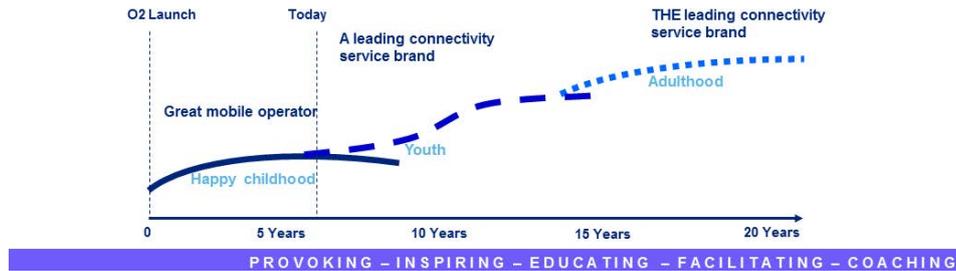
| WHO WE ARE | WHERE WE'RE GOING | HOW WE'LL GET THERE | HOW WE'LL MEASURE SUCCESS |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>Our Purpose (why we come to work) Giving customers more to be excited about every day</p> <p>Our Values (how we do things) We always put our customers first We're down to earth We're always looking for a better way We're always up for the challenge</p> | <p>Our Goal (what we're trying to achieve) Giving customers the best betting experience</p> <p>Our Customer Promises EXCITING We'll make it exciting for you EASY We'll make it easy for you INDIVIDUAL We'll treat you as an individual RESPONSIBLE We'll always act responsibly in our communities</p> <p>Our Goal for our Shareholders 1. Deliver the profit 2. Outperform the competition</p> | <p>Customer Understanding By consistently improving our understanding of customer needs and behaviours</p> <p>Customer Products – Sports By consistently creating exciting products and markets</p> <p>Customer Products – Machines By consistently providing exciting, exclusive games</p> <p>Customer Presentation By presenting all of our betting opportunities in an engaging and exciting way</p> <p>Customer Service By ensuring that we treat every customer as an individual</p> <p>Customer Channels – Retail By creating a more stimulating environment</p> <p>Customer Channels – Online and Telephone By delivering a more stimulating experience</p> <p>Social Responsibility By acting responsibly in all that we do</p> <p>Our People By creating an environment where people feel valued and engaged</p> <p>Wise Investments By developing our Future and IT capabilities appropriately, and by operating our business efficiently</p> | <p>Financial Measures Gross win, sales and profit</p> <p>Customer Measures Customer satisfaction, market share</p> <p>Staff Measures Staff engagement</p> |

IN SHOP, ONLINE, ON THE PHONE **CORAL** BRING IT ON!



O2 Vision

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Our Brand Promise | Helping Customers Connect |
| Our Strategy | Be fans of our customers and they'll be fans of us |
| Our 2010 Goal | Twice as many fans as our nearest competitor |
| Customer Plan | Love our customers Best place to work Fresh thinking ideas & services Connect for good Online & the Core |
| Our Values | Bold, Open, Trusted, Clear |



NEXT STEPS

For more information and support creating your one pager please contact me:

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p.s. Once you have developed your one pager you will need to work out how to communicate it correctly ... but that's another story I can share!!!!