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STRATEGY SYNCHRONIZATION[©]

Your first step to align and synchronize successful strategies

For over 25 years we have consistently observed that employees in all sizes and types of organizations struggle with:

- Lack of clarity and focus
 - Deficits of employee enablement
 - Lack of coordination between different groups
- Add to this adapting to Covid-19 and additional challenges include:
- Accelerated speed of change
 - Loss of spontaneous collaboration through distance
 - Zoom fatigue and difficulty gathering
 - Straight-up uncertainty

In contrast to firms that are struggling, high-performing organizations stand out for their ability to not only understand their top priorities, but also for their ability to align their top priorities with each other. These high performers are competitive because they have chosen the differentiating and reinforcing priorities. This approach creates advantages that are difficult for competitors to duplicate. We call such high-performing organizations Strategically Synchronized[®].

Strategy Synchronization[©] is a method for understanding and aligning the strategic priorities of the people in your company. It helps companies to understand where its strategic priorities reinforce or work at cross-purposes with each other.

Benefits include:

- *Your senior team and employees are aligned.*
- *You identify areas of under-focus and over-focus.*
- *Major priority areas are aligned with each other for competitive advantage.*

Developing Strategic Synchronization[©]

Through repeated analyses across hundreds of organizations, 14 focus areas have shown themselves to differentiate high-performing from lesser-performing organizations.

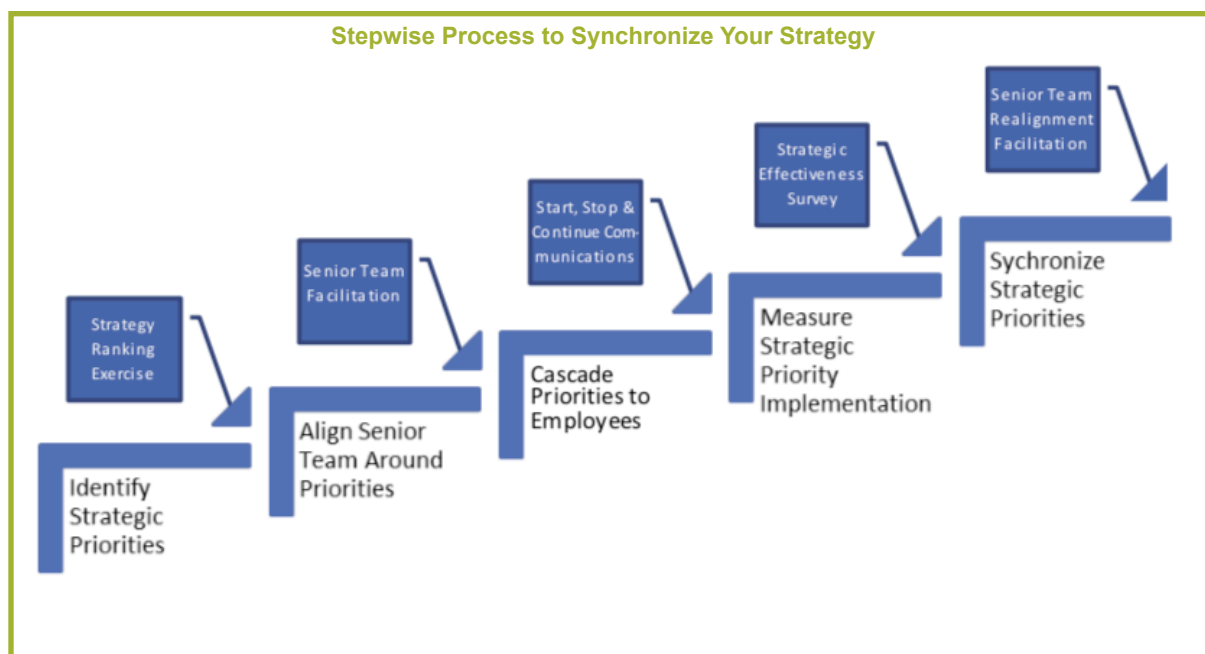


These 14 strategic focus areas are aligned with seven strategic requirement areas in four organizational orientations.

When we initially compiled the strategic focus areas from the data, we struggled to find the correct application for this insight. But with the advent of Covid-19, where nearly every organization is going through some form of transformation, the usefulness of understanding strategic priorities became apparent. Technology-driven and outsource-driven transformation have been accelerating for many years, but now virtually every organization worldwide must re-evaluate its business model, supply chain, technology or operations.

Strategy Synchronization[®] is an objective, data-driven methodology for aligning teams around their self-reinforcing priorities. It helps companies to better understand to what extent their stakeholders' priorities are aligned or misaligned. This knowledge enables them to work through mutual expectations and move through rapid transformations more effectively.

Establishing and Synchronizing Key Priorities



Identify Strategic Priorities

After hundreds of senior leader interviews and analyzing thousands of employee comments about what was and wasn't being done well, some insights emerged for high performing companies:

- They are most effective in narrowing and focusing on top priorities
- They gain competitive advantage through aligning priorities that reinforce each other

Top priorities include customer focus, employee focus, productivity, quality, leadership, and pricing. Other focus areas include branding, finance, network, innovation, safety, logistics, IT and variety.

Align Senior Team Around Priorities

If the senior team lacks alignment about its priorities, there will be confusion and conflict among rank-and-file employees. The wider organization cannot move forward unless there is general agreement among the senior team. The senior team must lead the alignment efforts, but first they need to understand:

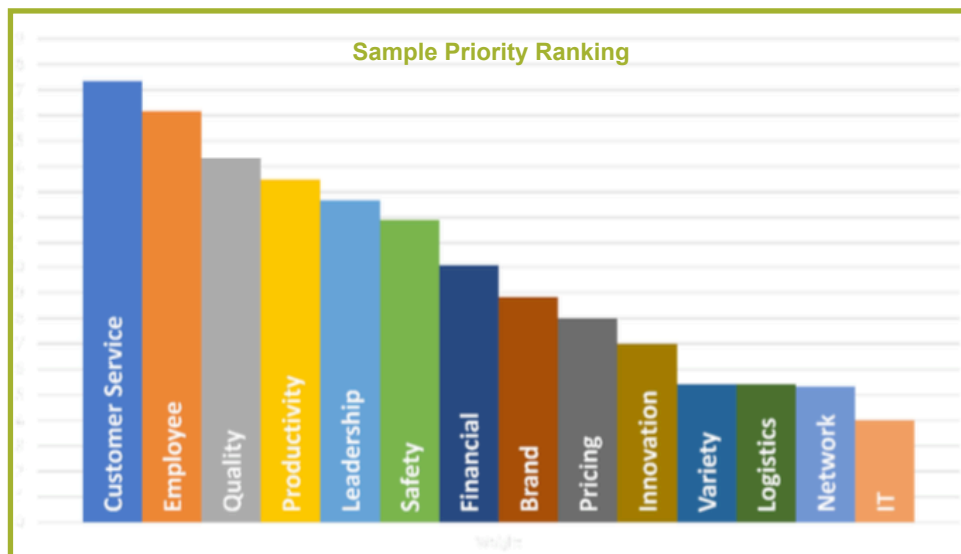
- Gaps between departments, divisions and management levels that need alignment
- Whether or not the priority areas reinforce or detract from each other

Senior teams invariably have differences of opinion about the priorities; some of that is natural. For example, you would expect the head of marketing to highly prioritize issues around the company brand. The question becomes, “What is marketing doing to make other departments aware of how the brand impacts other important strategic priorities?”

How do we determine if the senior team is aligned?

- The senior team does a ranking exercise from among the 14 strategic priorities.
- The resulting data is aggregated to show where gaps exist among the senior team perceptions.

In most cases, the ranking, reporting and senior team facilitation can take place within one week's time. It is a quick, cost-effective and powerful way to ensure that the senior team's priorities are aligned.

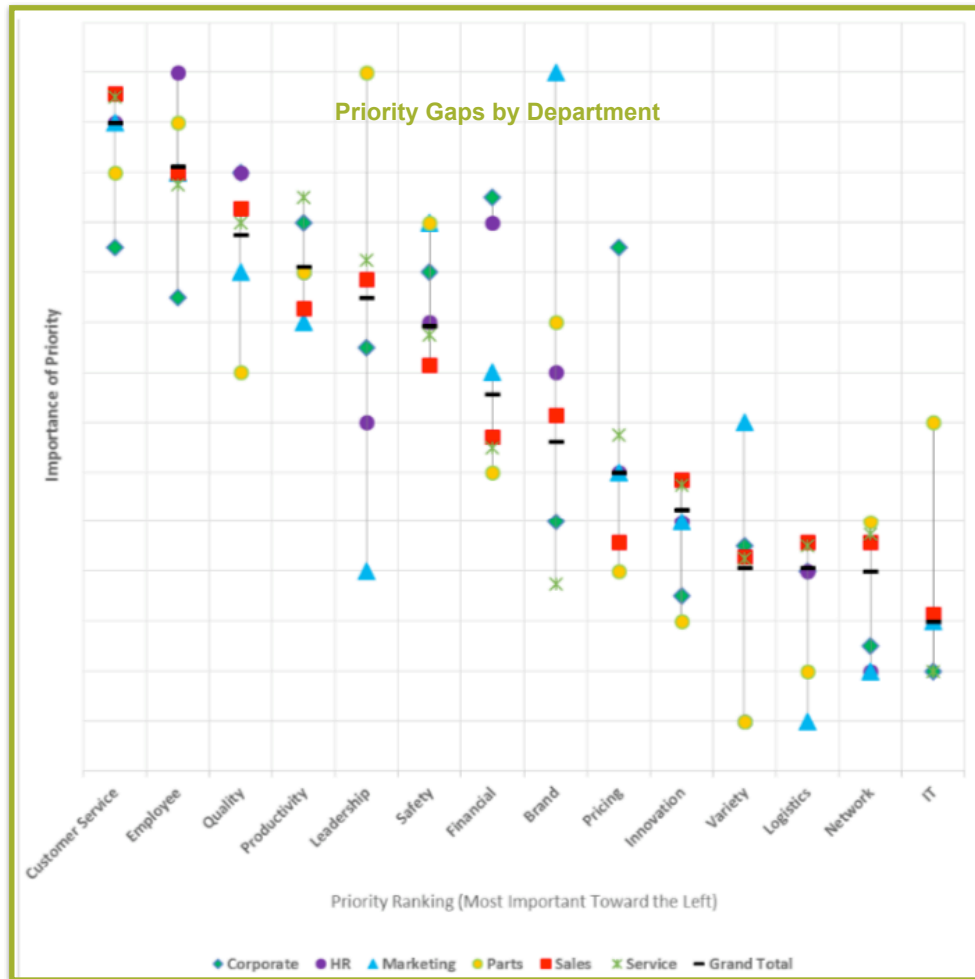


Cascade Priorities to Employees

An important success factor out of hundreds of companies studied is that the most successful companies seemed to have a magic formula for engaging their employees. But the insight from Strategy Synchronization® lies in the fact that high performing companies engage their employees through their success in aligning and driving priorities that reinforce each other. Engagement is a natural outcome of strategically synchronized companies because they make winning easier through focus and alignment.

Once the priorities have been identified, the senior team must communicate back to their respective teams about what they have learned, and what needs to Start, Stop and Continue to be successful. After some time for implementation, it may be helpful to find out the extent to which priorities are being adhered, and whether the individual priority areas reinforcing or detracting from each other.

Chart Priority Gaps



Next Step: Measuring Strategic Effectiveness[®]

A Strategic Effectiveness Survey[®] helps business leaders and teams measure the effectiveness of change initiatives that were launched as a result of Strategic Synchronization[®].

Once Strategy Synchronization has cascaded the Start, Stop and Continue initiatives, the organization needs to circle back to determine the extent to which employees are experiencing Strategic Effectiveness[®]. A Strategic Effectiveness Survey[®] can help to determine the extent to which strategic focus areas are receiving attention, and the extent to which these priorities reinforce or detract from each other. Outcomes include:

- Determining the extent to which strategic priorities receive appropriate focus
- Realignment of the senior team to promote activities that reinforce strategic priorities
- Adjusting priorities of individual teams as necessary

Strategy Synchronization[®] and Strategic Effectiveness[®] provide a stepwise process for measuring priorities, aligning senior team members around specific actions, cascading actions to employees, measuring the results of whether priorities reinforce each other, and re-aligning teams for success.