

Futures study led strategic enterprise transformation for sustainable shareholder and stakeholder value creation

Company leadership is in the midst, or at the very least at the advent, of a future that is characterised by increased uncertainty, volatility and discontinuity in the global and in particular in the business environment. The impact of this is that companies (and more specifically their leadership) are increasingly being confronted with a need to change and even transform their operations, including their strategies, to not only generate the profit levels over time to satisfy the thirst of their stakeholders for acceptable returns, but to ensure that they remain relevant over time.

The key question for these leaders is how to go about ensuring their company's relevance and competitive advantage in this increasingly volatile, turbulent and uncertain future.

The answer is the development of an enterprise that has future insight, or a comprehensive understanding of what the future may hold, and is able to effectively use this insight to make its future in the face of the emerging future. The leaders therefore, at a high level, need to ensure that the companies they are leading are agile and flexible to enable the effective response to a rapidly changing world.

At a more detailed level leadership needs to find ways to develop strategic insight, by identifying factors that impact their operations quicker than their competitors and have the innate ability to move rapidly to grasp opportunities and to smoothly adapt to challenges as they arise. The overriding question for leadership therefore is how to be first to the future and how to equip their company to deal rapidly with these opportunities and threats?

There are many tools and methodologies in the marketplace to assist leaders in their quest for the rapid deployment of sometimes fundamentally changed strategies, but these tools and methodologies tend to be function driven and compartmentalised. Leadership is



therefore mostly left with the added challenge to integrate these different tools into a single, usable roadmap for the development and implementation of transformation in their individual companies.

This study is therefore unique in that it presents an integrated enterprise transformation methodology that commences with a high level four stage approach to effecting enterprise transformation and then drills down into the more specific focus areas that need to be addressed to effect enterprise transformation on the one hand and on the other to build an organisation-wide capacity and capability to perform all the key steps that are necessary to ensure strategic insight and strategic agility.

The emphasis is on guiding the leader through a process of assessment which is aimed at gaining a thorough understanding of the company's current situation. The assessment specifically focuses on building an understanding of the outer environment, including the industry in which the company competes, as well as its internal aims, ethos and operating practices. Once the current situation is well understood the focus turns to the future and in particular the identification of a range of futures that may materialise. This step of the stage therefore focuses on gaining future foresight, which is ideally developed by an extended involvement of employees beyond the leadership team.

Armed with an understanding of the current state and future foresight, the possible implications (both opportunities and threats) are translated into future insight, culminating in a number of scenarios that vividly represent the relevant futures that are pertinent to the company. This future insight is then used to develop a new strategic intent, which is the capstone of the strategic response. The agenda for transformation is therefore the output of this stage. Simultaneously the methodology guides the leader through the steps that need to be undertaken to build capacity and capability that will enable the company to automatically develop strategic insight and strategic agility.



The next stage, the action stage, sees the leadership taking the strategic response and implementing it, thus taking the company from its current state to the envisioned future state. This stage shows the leader how to integrate key programme implementation management aspects to ensure the timely implementation of the blueprint, as well ensuring the development of new operations capabilities to drive the company towards its intended future state.

The final stage, the achievement stage, focuses on follow-through and how to ensure that the company fully implements the strategic response and can sustain the transformation process.