

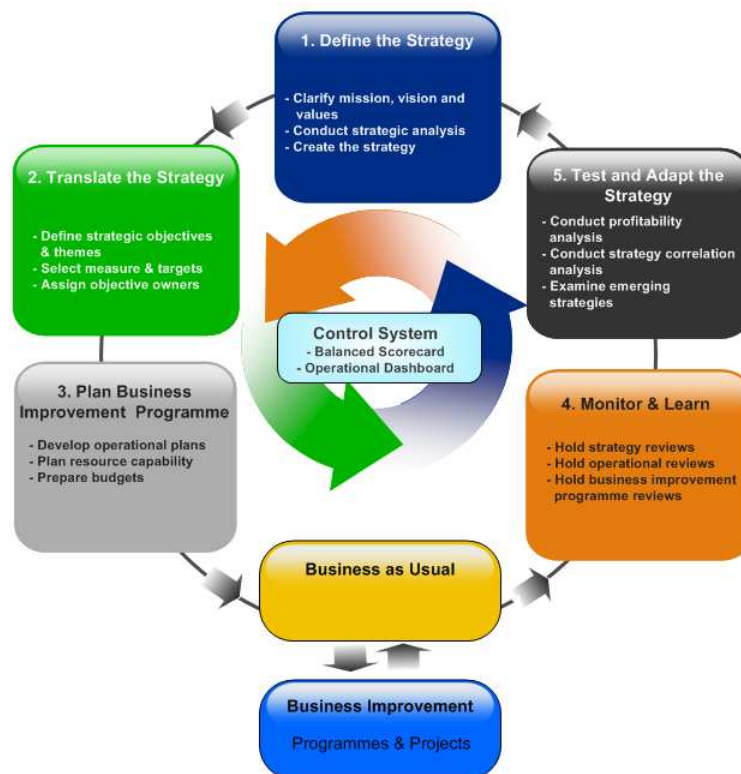
Wobble Boards and Climbing Frames

Elements of Closed Loop Management Systems exist in all organisations. The trick is to identify the missing links, and convey the advantages of completing and closing the loop.

But, the path may be spoiled by the past: Does the idea of a system to manage your organisation fill you with memories of excessive KPI's, presented in over engineered reports? Perhaps these reports were reviewed in an excess of meetings?

A Closed Loop Management Systems provides a frame around which decision makers can plan, own, deliver and improve their deliverables. In effect leaders can 'climb' this frame. But, if the frame is half missing we will fall off. Grazed knees will follow - or for us business professionals - poor, wrong or unused outputs such as multiple reports, unmanaged staff or poorly selected projects. This type of injury does not necessarily stop the show (and that is why it can be repeated many times), but it hurts.

Using Kaplan and Norton's Closed Loop Management System as a basis we have found that it is easy to quickly identify which pieces of the frame are missing, and which are in place. And the answers are often predictable. Follow the Closed Loop Management System round with me and consider whether you have any missing links:



1. Approved Strategy? – Yes. You have one? It has target markets, sales, profit, products, time frames, and an introduction from the Chairman. All helpful and necessary.
2. Translation of strategy? – Hmm. Who is accountable to deliver each target? Who will be consulted? How will success be measured. What is the consequence of success – or failure?

3. Improvement and Operational plans? – There will be a plan for each area if only in the managers' minds but hopefully written down. Perhaps relating clearly to the organisation's strategy. Perhaps not.

Business As Usual & Improvement Activities – Yes. The bottom of the loop. Alive where there is no loop! No numbering required; the operations that are a business. But, are they prioritised on strategy, performance, customer requirements and ability to execute? – Perhaps

4. Monitoring and Learning – Lip service, poor service or perhaps the opposite; excellent (re)actions to performance?
5. Testing the Strategy in the light of results? - Rarely strong I would suggest. Understanding the real levers that have worked and what has been missed or mistakenly prioritised takes skill and diligence.
1. Back to the start.. A Strategy that is based on what we learned by going round the loop? If so, this tanker may yet steer a better course.

Being a consultant can feel like stating the obvious, but hopefully the value comes from putting all the pieces together so that the leaders who are trusting in you can plan their way out of the proverbial woods.

So, create the frame, connect the loop (call it what you will). Then, use it, flex it and make some noise!

About the author



Name: Ian Pinches

Position: Managing Director, Morpheus Consulting

Background: Ian is a certified Lean Six Sigma Programme Manager, PRINCE2 Practitioner and CCAB Chartered Accountant with an exceptional track record of delivery in diverse business cultures.

He has 12 years of successful project and programme delivery experience including such roles as: GE Capital Master Black Belt, AXA Life Joint Six Sigma Programme Manager (UK), Microsoft Senior Six Sigma Programme Manager (EMEA), Lloyd's Register Mentor to the Group Director of Business Assurance, Work Stream Leader and Programme Resource Supplier (Global) and Health and Safety Executive Managing Consultant for Process Excellence.

The work under Ian's leadership was recognised in the 2009 IQPC European Awards, UK Management Consultancies Association Awards and the British Quality Foundation Awards - being short listed and winning in a number of categories, including winning Best Start Up Programme in Europe for Lloyd's Register.

Approach: As Managing Director of Morpheus Consulting Ian works closely with his Clients to build and assure customised programmes of work. Ian partners with senior managers to identify and agree realistic and attainable programme deliverables. Ian then maintains a close working relationship to assure the quality of delivery throughout the programme of work and beyond.