



AN EXCELLENT STRATEGIC ROADMAP VS BUSINESS AS USUAL IN A DYNAMIC BUSINESS SCAPE

Introduction

Backtrack 10 to 15 years, many businesses and government agencies would be operating in a reasonably fixed-no-room-for-variable-ness manner. They would occasionally migrate to a new method of functioning through a formal, prolonged change program, and this change was often the exception, necessitating the need for a strategic plan and roadmap to avoid disruptions and continue to manage the business effectively.



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According to a Gartner's benchmark analysis from 2018, 73% of business leaders surveyed agreed that changes are happening faster, pushing organisations to go through restructuring, culture changes, and mergers or acquisitions, independently or all at once. Unfortunately, only a few organisations have been able to adapt to this new reality as 80 to 85% of the world's companies still operate without a strategy, according to Michael Porter and Roger Martin.

A strategic roadmap is a conceptualised image of a company or a business's tactical plan, it contains mapped out processes with goals and objectives, timelines, tasks, resources required, etc. It bridges the gaps for your employees by illustrating how their daily pursuits position with the company's mission.

An excellent strategic road map is like a GPS (Global Positioning System) for your business; It not only tells you your position and shows you the direction to your finish point, but it can also make apparent the fastest route as less time is delegated to figuring things out, and routes to avoid or mitigate potential risks are often clearer. It is one of the best tools to lift the haze and make your vision clear for everyone on the team.

Business as Usual – BAU as we like to say is

really a 'settled system' of carrying out repetitive work, it can be described as a non-structured but generally accepted way of running a business. It is usually not strategic – though it perhaps evolved from some semblance of a strategic plan whether documented or not – and seldom makes use of a structured but variable plan of activities. An activity that potentially causes a deviation from BAU will typically encounter resistance among teams, for many reasons. People may not be able to comprehend the changes, and might oppose them, or they may simply need time to adjust or get used to the changes being introduced.

Business as usual covers a broad category of day-to-day business operations, which includes:

- Team members carrying out their daily tasks, as defined by their job description.
- Outcomes or deliverables resulting from projects that are integrated into the business's daily operations.
- Tasks deemed crucial to running the daily operations of the business.
- Attending to critically rated tasks that contribute to the purpose of the business to be achieved.
- Tasks carried out to achieve terms of contracts or agreements.

What they all have in common is their consistency after some time, such that they become the 'only' way to do things, such that anything else becomes a distraction to be resisted.

In the context of this review, BAU is an undocumented, haphazard pattern that has become the norm across different teams, and is seen as the only way to approach any challenge that presents itself. We attempt to analyse the difference between following through on a strategic roadmap and BAU activities, and establish a pointer to which is preferable in the world of business today. A Strategic Roadmap incorporates optional outcomes into its planning, as such, they can be hugely flexible. Thus, no matter what internal or external changes emerge, if your plan has been mapped effectively, businesses will be able to adjust to these changes in a structured manner and avoid making costly mistakes. Also, they allow the design and appropriation of change by defining measures that can be used to monitor results. On the other hand, BAU (if approached without intuition and context) can be rigid, usually indicating a more fixed manner of operations without consideration to context per time.

Case: Imagine a simple case; a lady who changes her name (due to marriage or whatever reason), has executed a change of name procedure in the courts and has the necessary affidavits certifying the validity of current pertinent documentation – e.g., passport on hand. She goes to her bank and applies for a change of name on her account, and the Officer says she must produce an ID card in the new name or must maintain the old name.

Why? Because BAU procedures say an ID with a new name must be provided to change a name on the customer database, so regard-

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less of the fact that the passport is still valid for another 5 years and must expire before a renewal, as well as there being supporting documents to attest to the change of name, the Officer declines to deal with the request, unless a manager intervenes. Unfortunately, even a manager may be stuck in his/her BAU ways to think through the context and rather defer to ‘procedure’.

Solution: A strategic roadmap on the other hand would have looked at the possible reasons a person would have required a name change and considered all possible outcomes and associated existing documentation in line with the strategic intent, such that there would be optional courses of action to deal with the situation, without really needing to defer to someone's sole discretion. What options exist? What would be needed to execute those alternatives? What is the likely outcome of those alternatives? All these are given attention through the strategic planning process and each have a node within a strategic roadmap.

How strategic roadmaps can benefit businesses?

There are ways in which BAU can incorporate an excellent strategic roadmap for increased productivity and success. Firstly, by acknowledging and recognising the relevance of having a strategic roadmap for your business; there has to be an acknowledgment from the business owner that the foundation of the business depends solely on the buildup of strategy for an effective structure. Eventually, the main purpose of having a strategic roadmap is to be able to evolve and refine virtually every aspect of one’s effectiveness – from employee engagement to proposition execution, to leadership. Here are some benefits of a strategic roadmap.

1. **A shared perception of responsibility is infused:** Collaboration and collective responsibility are in demand when a strategic roadmap is operationalised. The key to having a beneficial and successful business using a strategic roadmap is to engage everyone with the plan, in the early, mid, and end stages of execution thereby leading to the monitoring of results at regular intervals.
2. **Operational efficiency among leadership skyrockets:** It provides leadership with the knowledge to align with the organisation’s functional activities to achieve set goals. Operational efficiency is also increased amongst leadership when it fosters relevant, objective, and company-wide leadership considerations, such as budget demand to achieve a set of accomplishments.



3. **Employee satisfaction and continuity expand:** Employees tend to become responsible and they have a sense of responsibility for the work, rather than just being handed or told a set of expected processes per activity. Also, it can be used to plan dynamism like better career growth, bonus or benefits, and upgrading workplace culture because the skills gaps and required succession become immediately apparent.
4. **It supervises expectations and supports reliance:** Transparency is assured during this process, as trust is built and ambiguity is crumbled. A strategic roadmap executed well or in the continuous process of execution is beneficial because it creates more opportunities for collaboration.

How businesses today can incorporate excellent strategic planning into their operations.

First, it is key to design, review, redesign and or understand the established corporate philosophy and how it envisions your business. These simple statements that culminate in your vision, mission, values and culture, set the tone of what becomes the strategy your business will be built upon over the next decade or century!

Your Vision:

An important guiding post that every business should repeatedly be reminded of is a clear vision statement. A company's vision statement serves as a strategic goal, and it can also act as a blueprint or guide for employees when difficulties are experienced helping to prompt employees and drivers towards shared goals.

Your Values:

Your company's values should align with the culture that the organisation lives by towards achieving that vision, if they are not aligned, changes should be made so everyone can be guided by the same principles. Value helps employees understand what the business stands for. Guidance for work and a sense of security are developed when value is broadly integrated in a business.

The Critical Goals:

Outline the critical goals to help make the vision a reality. The goals can be for the com-

pany as a whole or oversee a different primary area such as brand development, customer service improvement, and social media marketing, or can be developed along business units, again as further integration and ownership of the contribution towards the business's overall vision.

Unit Strategies:

Outline the various tactics for achieving the critical goals. Strategies ensure every part of the business is planned. This means efficiency and effectiveness are active outcomes that drive BAUs. Everyone is aware of what they need to be doing and responsibilities are apportioned appropriately. It can help a business gain a competitive advantage over others. Your company's tactics a delicate and important part of the roadmap, as they bring each part of the map to life. So, spend some time here to carefully list all the actions that are required, implementable, and trackable. Who is going to do what and when? What resources would they require? These answers move your strategic imperatives to operations. Strategies often fail because not enough attention is paid to operationalising the plans.

Potential Roadblocks:

Layout probable risks to each plan and think through the responses to each of those risks and outline their delivery and potential outcomes.

The Milestones:

Plant small flags on your roadmap to indicate the spots where important milestones for the achievement of the goals will happen. It is important to celebrate all wins no matter how small, they keep the fire burning.

Conclusion

Change is now a normal part of day-to-day business and the rapid pace is too complex for the traditional Business As Usual way of conducting operations. Unless organisations, and the way they manage change evolve, they will be overtaken by their competition or drowned by external events. Herein lies the necessity of a Strategic Roadmap for a successful business. In the absence of a plan, a company is more likely to operate aimlessly leaving employees unsure of the value of their input and the essence of the business today! Thus, it is important that as business drivers, you apportion time to develop an effective strategic plan; yes, the planning, execution and monitoring process could be daunting and does take up time and resources, however, its rewards far outweigh any pitfalls and sets the pace for the eventual success of any venture.

For assistance in the review and or design of your strategic roadmap, send an inquiry to mc@pedabo.com