

Strategy Mapping

Strategy Mapping is a distinct, well-codified methodology for organizations seeking to define or refine their vision and determine an appropriate, yet flexible, roadmap to implementing that vision. It is well-suited to organizations that are undergoing, or anticipating, major discontinuous changes—as the result of either internal or external (i.e., industry or competitive) forces.

Our Strategy Mapping techniques have been applied for over a decade across a range of industries including life sciences, financial services, high tech manufacturing, and consumer products. Use of these techniques helps to foster *business resilience*—the ability of an organization proactively and dynamically to chart a course through highly uncertain and dangerous waters.

Strategy Mapping typically includes the following steps (adjustable to fit specific client requirements):

- Creation of a small set of plausible future descriptions (end states) of the organization’s business or industry landscape.
- Development of a carefully crafted set of potentially pivotal future headlines that could indicate key trends that might impact the organization (e.g., technology, competition, new business models).
- Strategy Mapping exercise(s) to “rehearse” the end states and determine which headlines have the most relevance; and then make choices about the organization’s vision and the near-term actions needed to achieve that vision.

Employing the technique of *simulated hindsight*, in the context of a highly-prepared workshop format, participants are able to think about the future as though it were an exercise in writing history. By projecting themselves into the future and looking back, people demonstrate a keen ability to determine those decisions that are most critical to an organization achieving its desired goals.

Strategy Mapping can be used at almost any level of an organization, and indeed has been applied successfully to cross-organization alignment. It has been used with individual business units, with cross-functional organizations, and at the executive level. Everyone benefits from being able to practice thinking about how to deal proactively with the future – rather than waiting for the future to unfold and to react, possibly too late.

By using Strategy Mapping, an organization will come away with a roadmap of strategic contingencies: an achievable, relevant vision and a set of immediate steps required to achieve that vision. More than that, the people in the organization will have a chance to try out different futures, observing the benefits and drawbacks of each, and are then much better prepared to handle unanticipated changes that will surely arise in the future.