



Delivery

EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY

strategy

NEW YORK CITY
25 OCT 2018

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Design

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BRIGHTLINE INITIATIVE NEW YORK 10/25/2018 @WORK

Strategy

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:
STRATEGY@WORK 2018, NEW YORK CITY

Brightline Initiative's **Strategy@Work** Conference

Brought Strategists,
Leaders & Thinkers
Together.

I
Ideas
emerge
constantly

O+
Opportunities
strike or pass
through without
you knowing,
we look
more for
solutions

?
by asking
questions
like...
How to
connect
strategy design
and delivery
in a challenging
and disruptive
environment?

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THEME:

Linking Strategy Design and Delivery to Ensure Success in the World

Top global executives, business leaders and management thinkers gathered for an exclusive conclave hosted by **Brightline Initiative**. The flagship conference, **Strategy@Work**, debuted on 25 October 2018 at The Pierre Hotel in New York City. 112 leaders attended the conference on-site and 270 professionals joined through live-stream from all around the world. The conference unpacked two key questions, sparking conversations on bridging the gap between ideas and results:

1. How to *connect* strategy design and delivery in a challenging and disruptive environment?
2. How to *adapt* to make things happen in a volatile environment when things change overnight?



KEYNOTE SESSION:

Need for a Scientific Revolution

Roger L. Martin

Sometimes more effort toward a particular goal doesn't generate better results because the theory behind the effort is not up to the task. Yet typically the view is that the theory needs to be refined and/or the effort level increased what Thomas Kuhn referred to as the pursuit of normal science. Instead, what is actually required is a scientific revolution, which addresses the goal in a dramatically different way. Such is the case with the challenge of strategy execution. It is time for a Kuhnian scientific revolution if we are to make significant progress.

PANEL 1:

Mind the Gap: Connecting Strategy Design and Delivery

Deepa Prahalad, Montazar Muhalhal, Prof. Richard De'Aveni, Rita McGrath

Growth and prosperity depend on implementing the right strategies the right way. Several researches have shown that executives recognize there is a gap between strategy design and delivery. This panel will discuss two main questions: In an era of disruption and volatility, what are the main causes of this gap? What leaders and organizations can do to close this gap?

15-MINUTE
STRATEGIZING
SESSION:

Building Invincible Companies

Alex Osterwalder

Strategy + Execution = Shareholder Value Creation.

Practical Lessons from the Trenches.

Vishal Lall

PANEL 2:

The Human Side of Transformation

Claudio Garcia, Susan Steele, Rahaf Harfoush, Richard Straub, Vishal Lall

We need to rethink how strategies are implemented. The link between design and delivery is made of solutions created and implemented by people. This panel will explore some key questions: Why people are frequently the least leveraged asset although they are critical to strategic transformation? What organizations can do to leverage their most critical and important asset, their people?

15-MINUTE
STRATEGIZING
SESSION:

Questioning Implementation: When Implementation Drives Design

Prof. Henry Mintzberg

PANEL 3:

Strategy in Times of Disruption and Crisis

Alex Osterwalder, Prof. Henry Mintzberg, Julia Kirby, Martin Reeves

In today's business environment, disruption and crises are inevitable. This panel will focus on some key questions: What can radically change when organizations face crises or disruption? What are the commonalities for teams that emerged stronger after a crisis? How can leaders use these learnings to improve strategy implementation capabilities?

15-MINUTE
STRATEGIZING
SESSION:

Your Execution Needs a Strategy

Martin Reeves

KEYNOTE:

Leadership and Transformation: A Conversation with Lou Gerstner

Joy Robins, Louis Gerstner Jr.

SUMMARY:

The Strategy@Work conference uncovered the reasons why strategic execution suffers in large organizations.

KEYNOTE SESSION:

Need for a Scientific Revolution



Roger L. Martin

The opening keynote session of the conference featured world top management thinker, [Roger L. Martin](#). He observed that work is being re-organized. Organizations need to shift the paradigm from one where employees predominantly have flat jobs to one where employees predominantly have a portfolio of projects. With this shift, organizations will have better productivity, happier employees, and better output. Employees will know they are progressing by getting to tackle trickier projects and not by climbing the hierarchy of flat jobs.

“The idea of organizations being built like machines was outdated.”

He suggested that the idea of organizations built like a machine, is an outdated idea. ***“Companies run in a ‘piece part’ way are becoming less effective.”*** Modern corporations are adaptive systems. They interact within complicated eco-systems. This approach requires a scientific revolution in strategy execution. In the new paradigm, putting strategy to work is not only the responsibility of top management. Each employee makes crucial choices or “trade-offs” every day to drive the organization ahead.

PANEL 1:

Mind the Gap: Connecting Strategy Design and Delivery



Deepa Prahalad

There is an ever-growing gap between bold ideas and impactful implementation during changing times. Several researches have shown that executives recognize there is a gap between strategy design and delivery.

The panel discussed two main questions:

- 1. In an era of disruption and volatility, what are the main causes of this gap?**
- 2. What leaders and organizations can do to close this gap?**

This panel was moderated by [Deepa Prahalad](#), is an innovation and design expert and CEO at Anuvaa LLC. The panelists summarized the challenges that leaders face while implementing complex changes. The discussion then graduated to ways to overcome them. Providing a view from the trenches, [Montazar Muhalhal](#) of Saudi Telecom Company shared his experiences,

“Whenever faced with a challenge, leaders either throw processes or assign KPI's. It's important to think of how to mix them both.”



Left to right: Deepa Prahalad, Montazar Muhalhal, Prof. Richard De'Aveni, Rita McGrath

Rita McGrath, Professor of Strategy at the Columbia Business School, provided a practical solution to solve the design-implementation gap. ***“We (leaders) have this enormous desire to be right. We argue over data, especially in situations where the right answer doesn't exist yet. Let's all focus on finding the solution,”*** she reminded the audience. She noted the challenge for the digital-age leaders.

“With the advent of new technologies, new questions arise about our perspective, processes. Leaders have to take decisions about how to best deploy the new tools that we have.”

Prof. Richard D'Aveni, Bakala Professor of Strategy at the Tuck School of Business, Dartmouth College, echoed the need to re-examine the traditional management theories.

“We are too often stuck in old paradigms that make it impossible for us to think about the future.”

*Alex Osterwalder*

15-MINUTE
STRATEGIZING
SESSION:

Building Invincible Companies

Strategy@Work featured two 15-minute Strategizing sessions presentations focused on a practical issue that resonates with CEOs. In the first session, Entrepreneur, *Alex Osterwalder* revealed that they know how to get the best ideas and develop them.

How do large, seemingly invincible organizations like Amazon exploit and explore new opportunities? They ensure that the brightest ideas stand out and become a reality.

“It's almost an evolutionary process. These best teams will drive the real growth engines. The role of the great innovators of our time make sure that the best teams work on the best ideas.”

The role of leadership in the process is clearly to provide clear directions and create a space where innovations can thrive.

15-MINUTE
STRATEGIZING
SESSION:

Strategy + Execution
= Shareholder Value Creation.
Practical Lessons
from the Trenches.

Vishal Lall, Chief Strategy Officer of Hewlett Packard Enterprises, estimated that companies spend \$20 Billion USD on strategy, often missing the key to successful strategy. Strategy must involve the people. It is not a one-time activity where you set and forget it. It is continuous process. He reiterated an often-ignored reality.

“The process of strategy is dynamic, and you need to be adjusting your strategy execution as you go along.”



Vishal Lall



Rahaf Harfoush

PANEL 2:

The Human Side of Transformation

The panel on 'Human-side of Transformation' dug deeper into the linkage between design and delivery. The execution of transformation is solutions created and implemented by people. The panel asked two fundamental questions about the reality of transformation:

- 1. Why are people often the least leveraged asset although they are critical to strategic transformation?**
- 2. What can organizations do to leverage their most important asset, their people?**

This panel was moderated by Digital Anthropologist and author, [Rahaf Harfoush](#). She acknowledged that

“The human side of transformation is a universal issue for organizations. Leaders need to think about ethics, about what are the values that the society is going to strive towards.”



Left to right: Rahaf Harfoush, Richard Straub, Susan Steele, Vishal Lall, Claudio Garcia

Richard Straub, the Founder and President of the Global Peter Drucker Forum, advised leaders to solve problems through a human angle.

“Too often, we are looking at problems through an engineering angle, an economic or technocratic lens.”

Susan Steele, Executive Partner at IBM Global Talent & Engagement Center of Excellence, identified an expensive oversight.

“We need to personalize the transformation for each individual. There is a failure to embrace analytics, to personalize the transformation for them.”

During the discussion, EVP Strategy and Corporate Development at Lee Hecht Harrison, **Claudio Garcia** provided a useful tip for leaders,

“Before we start the transformation project, we should look at the human dynamics. Transformation is a human journey.”

15-MINUTE
STRATEGIZING
SESSION:

Questioning Implementation: When Implementation Drives Design

Prof. Henry Mintzberg is the author of more than 20 books on Management strategy and a Cleghorn Professor of Management Studies at McGill University. He reinforced that strategy should not come from the top leaders. It should come from the customers and employees. People and their communities deliver the strategy according to the design. Mintzberg says that ***“communities rather than the leadership, should deliver strategies.”***



Prof. Henry Mintzberg

PANEL 3:

Strategy in Times of Disruption and Crisis

In today's business environment, disruption and crises are inevitable.

This panel focused on answering three key questions:

- 1. What can radically change when organizations face crises or disruption?**
- 2. What are the commonalities for teams that emerged stronger after a crisis?**
- 3. How can leaders use these learnings to improve strategy implementation capabilities?**

Moderated by Julia Kirby, the panel featured Martin Reeves, Director of The Boston Consulting Group Henderson Institute, Prof. Henry Mintzberg and Alex Osterwalder.



Julia Kirby



Left to right: Julia Kirby, Prof. Henry Mintzberg, Martin Reeves, Alex Osterwalder

Prof. Mintzberg shared the importance of problem solving and learning from crisis situations. He stressed that the solutions should come from communities that respond to the situation quickly. The role of managers in the organization should be to build and encourage these communities.

Alex Osterwalder shared his experience where during times of crises, the tendency of most organization is to focus on what they do well and cut costs for innovation. In his talk he said,

“Organizations in crisis not only focus on tackling the present but also enhance the capability to manage the future better.”

Martin Reeves cautioned organizations against generalizations and look for specific trends in their business landscape.



Martin Reeves

15-MINUTE
STRATEGIZING
SESSION:

Your Execution Needs a Strategy

How should organizations design their strategy in an ever-changing landscape? **Martin Reeves** advised that leaders should focus on the specific change. Leaders also need to be mindful of the landscape around the change.

“We should think about the clarity of ends and means to adapt our strategies.”

KEYNOTE:

Leadership and Transformation: A Conversation with Lou Gerstner

Louis Gerstner Jr. is the leader responsible for the reinvigoration of IBM. In 1993, when he took over the reins of the tech giant, the organization was facing existential threat. He shared his firsthand experience of managing the technological, cultural and financial turnaround at IBM. Providing the view from the top, the Former Chairman and CEO of IBM, highlighted the role of leaders,

“The CEO or the head of the organization needs to take the time out to communicate. They need to instill a sense of urgency for change, throughout the organization.”



Louis Gerstner Jr.



Master of Ceremony: Ricardo Vargas, Executive Director, Brightline Initiative

SUMMARY:

The **Strategy@Work Conference** uncovered the reasons why strategic execution suffers in large organizations.

There is a need to re-think the existing paradigm where the organization is a machine. Given the uncertain external environment, the organization functions as an adaptive system. The organization is like a human body, the heart of an organization, and the most crucial factor in achieving goals and delivering results are its people. Given the importance of the people, Brightline Initiative released a **People Manifesto** at the **Strategy@Work** event.

The reality in many organizations is that the leadership often put the best resources, their best minds, into defining and creating a strategy and delivery is often an afterthought. Combined with an insufficient understanding of the organization and its competitive environment, the gap further widens. Leaders need to be in-step with the changing landscape. They should be able to take the organization towards a well-envisioned and purposeful future.

**Join us for Strategy@Work 2019
on Thursday, 24 October 2019 in New York City.**



Dive deeper into the Strategy@Work 2018 discussion
by [watching the videos](#) or [downloading the presentations](#).



Brightline™ is a Project Management Institute (PMI) initiative together with leading global organizations dedicated to helping executives bridge the expensive and unproductive gap between strategy design and delivery. Brightline delivers insights and solutions that empower leaders to successfully transform their organization's vision into reality through strategic initiative management.

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