

HOW TO GET STRATEGY RIGHT:
**Bridging the Strategy-to-Execution
Gap with Enterprise Destination
Mapping (EDM)**



Business leaders are witnessing industries reshape at a blistering rate. The impetus to change is not just an idea; it's incredibly real. New technology platforms, global competition, and behavioral trends (and especially the intersection of these forces) are causing leaders to constantly ask – how should our strategy for navigating this new landscape evolve? How can we successfully gain long-term and sustainable momentum towards a bold new ambition?

STRATEGY CHALLENGES: **DEATH BY A THOUSAND PAPER CUTS**

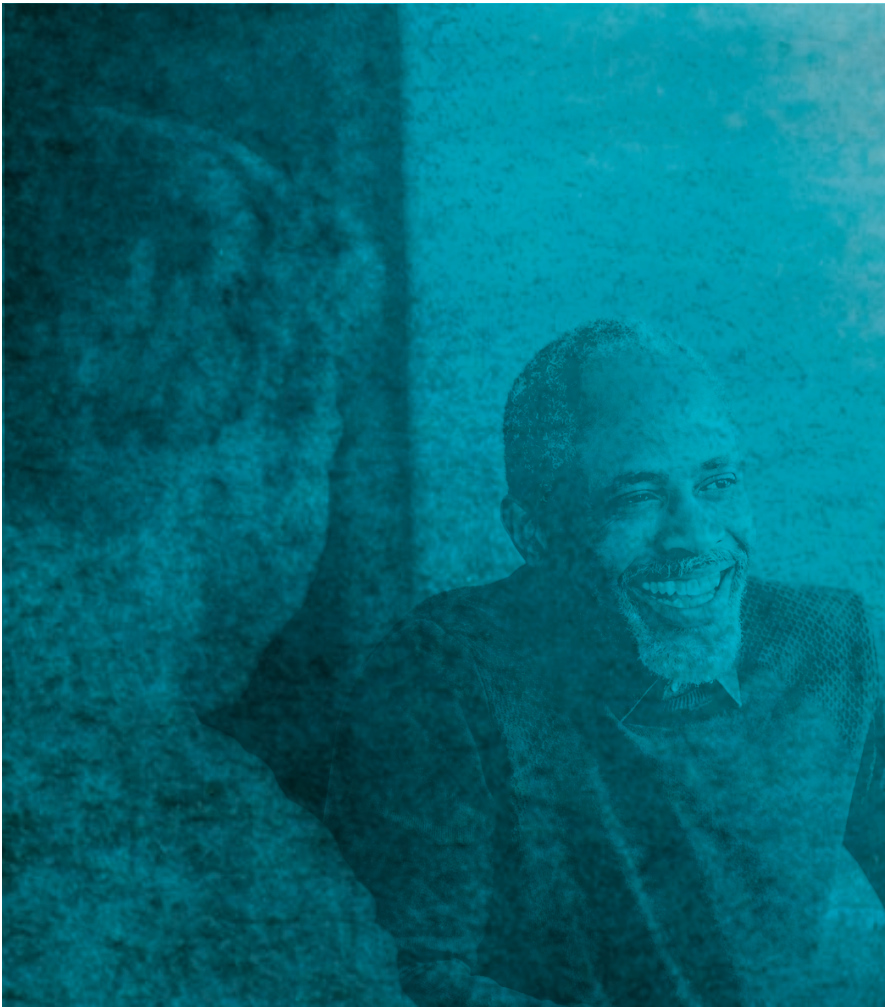
In a way that can almost be described as innate, consumer product and life sciences companies are facing more capable competitors, many of whom have flexibility and adaptability hard-coded directly into their DNA. As new technologies and services permeate the marketplace, the pressure to innovate and seize opportunities isn't just visionary, it's impending. As such, it is critical for organizations to rapidly and decisively transform their operating models while articulating a clear pathway for future, sustainable growth.

HOW CAN ORGANIZATIONS IMPROVE THEIR ODDS?

In our experience, the most effective and successful way for companies to bridge the gap between strategy and execution is to build a clear vision that cascades as a tangible operational plan throughout an organization. This approach works because it creates a unifying framework and repeatable processes to adapt and evolve strategic imperatives in both the short and long run. Said differently, it offers “freedom within a framework” to ensure overall alignment while creating flexibility to adapt to everchanging market conditions.

Without this overarching strategic framework, many leaders find that when they attempt to formulate a new strategic change (whether a long-term transformation or a shorter-term initiative), the attempt can quickly stagnate due to organizational backslide, get weighted down by gravitational forces of legacy behaviors/culture, and/or due to lack of steam to keep the momentum moving forward.

Therefore, a commitment to adaptability and a deep understanding of the challenges associated with transforming an organization are prerequisites prior to embarking on large, transformational strategic changes.



A SIMPLE YET POWERFUL FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS: ENTERPRISE DESTINATION MAPPING (EDM)

We have found that employing Clarkston’s Enterprise Destination Mapping methodology (EDM) is a proven and successful way to link an organization’s strategic ambition to operational realities (see Figure 1). When done successfully, EDM lays out an organization’s overall strategy and establishes a connection across all tactics to ensure cohesive actions are created, deployed, and measured.

ENTERPRISE DESTINATION MAPPING FRAMEWORK



EDM helps organizations focus on identifying the tangible, measurable ways for leaders to articulate their ambition, assess their capabilities, and align goals with the specific needs of the organization’s cultural DNA. What differentiates EDM from other approaches is how closely it relates to operations at both a macro and a micro level – i.e., it ensures the aspiration is connected to the executorial elements of the plan across every element of an organization’s value chain.

EDM focuses on clearly aligning and cascading a strategy that provides individuals with clarity and purpose in a business environment dominated by competing – and sometimes misaligned – corporate priorities. By forcing an organization to think through every element of its strategic imperatives (but also the required capabilities and operational supporting pillars to sustain that new vision), EDM exposes blind spots, uncovers new risks and restrictions, creates an environment primed for new and innovative thinking, and enables the right set of conditions for individual contributors to be bold. But, a bold strategy without proper execution quickly becomes a nice book (or a set of slides) sitting on a shelf – and that is why EDM’s linkage of strategic ambition to operational realities makes it a powerful tool for executives.

THE BOTTOM LINE: **PRACTICAL APPLICATION TO HELP ORGANIZATIONS TRANSFORM**

We often hear from clients and executives that a vision does not equal reality, and that the strength of a strategy can only be measured by how well it is executed – and we could not agree more.

EDM aims to help organizations make bold strategic decisions grounded in operational realities by offering a clear process to create (or oftentimes, translate) strategic change into the right program to drive a business transformation forward. Through decades of experience and practical experimentation, EDM provides a methodical way to rigorously articulate the supporting decisions at an operational level that support an organization's future direction. EDM differentiates itself from many other strategic frameworks because it goes beyond strategy formulation, and rather serves as beacon for decision-making over time, as a validator of strategic market conditions and assumptions, and as a benchmark for targets and goals over the life of the strategy.

For organizations seeking to transform their business to meet consumers' growing demands or their increasingly more competitive industry landscape, Enterprise Destination Mapping provides newfound clarity from strategy to execution; sometimes, clarity is the missing ingredient to spur forward momentum.

Many can formulate strategies or develop a tactical plan to execute; EDM has served as a proven method for bridging the gap between strategy and execution. To learn more about how Clarkston can help bring this to life inside your organization, **please contact us.**