

EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT IN STRATEGY REALIZATION

Designing a tool to motivate employees for strategy realization by creating a win-win between the organizations objectives and employees' interest

Strategiefabriek; office of Strategiemarkers



Master Thesis
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Delft University of Technology
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A theoretical models
on the employees'
perspective of the
realization of strategy.



A practical tool which
involves employees
in the realization of
strategy.

Employee involvement in strategy realisation

Master thesis
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STRATEGIEMAKERS



PREFACE

Great that you have found my master thesis, I'm excited to share with you what result this project has brought.

My whole life I have been drawn into making things due to my creative DNA which I inherited from my grandpa. I started as a kid by making prom dresses and a big unit for my mum in order to get water out the canal in our backyard more easily. It was a pre-set path for me to start at the faculty of Industrial Design Engineering. During my Masters I was drawn to the combination of creative thinking and business, and how drastically innovation could impact organizations. This appealed to my curiosity of exploring the new and unknown by jumping into the deep. This urge together with the fact that I immediately felt a connection with the employees at Strategiemakers when I was there for a case-day, came together as a master thesis. Strategy was a fairly unknown topic for me but the idea of motivating all employees to join in the contribution of it, seemed a challenging quest for me which I loved to take on. See for yourself what the result has become in this master thesis.

I would like to thank Ferry, Jochem and Myrthe from Strategiemakers for your great enthusiasm from the start and opportunity to take on this project. To all my colleagues at Strategiemakers,

a big thank you for all the support, coffee, awesome Christmas dinner and laughs you've given me during my time with you. A special thanks for Jochem for our conversations and your challenging questions about strategy, organizations and what it means to be a designer. Your (sometimes) critical feedback and perspective on the project pushed me to make the most out of it. Thanks Marina for your fullest support up into the minor details and enthusiasm for the project from the beginning to the end. Thanks Frido for your passion about strategy along with the challenges it can bring and your creative and insightful input. A special thanks to all the people who participated in the interviews, workshops and evaluation of this project. Furthermore, I could not have done this project without my fellow design students: Matthijs, Sanne, Tessa and Peter. You guys helped me in so many ways and were always there to exchange views. Also, thanks to Jens for using his radio voice in my video and my brother Michael for his help with the animation of it.

And last but not least, thanks to my friends and family who had to listen to me going on about this project for eight months; you provided me with endless support. Most special thanks to Gerwin, for supporting me in every way you could.

Enjoy the read,

Hannah Heemskerk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

STRATEGY REALIZATION IS CHALLENGING

Strategy is used by organizations to adjust to emerging challenges and opportunities in the market environment. Due to a more rapidly changing market caused by globalization, strategy has become increasingly important. The strategic approach is a structured method to address this difficult multidimensional problem and it enables organizations to guide its direction of development in a substantiated way. Organizations often struggle to implement strategy successfully caused by difficulties with the transition from the strategy formulation phase into the realization phase. Fully involving the employees in this phase appears to be challenging, they are often not properly informed or do not understand the strategy.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Strategiemakers, a consultancy focussing on helping clients with their innovation, strategy and organization, aspires to make more impact during this challenging realization phase. Existing solutions in scientific literature were predominantly theoretical and disconnected with practice. Moreover, solutions in books written by practitioners consisted of many loose tips which are easily forgotten. Therefore, the main objective of this thesis was to create a holistic and practical solution which improves the realization of strategy. The solution was designed to be usable by Strategiemakers as well as by organizations themselves.

THE STRATEGIC PROCESS

A theoretical research and empirical research were conducted to create an holistic understanding of the strategic process and triangulate the found insights. In the literature three phases of the process were identified. After this, they were singularized by researching the strategic process of four highly varying organizations. Additionally, this empirical research uncovered a few challenges in the strategic process which were mainly located in the realization phase. Six primary challenges were pinpointed: (1) Strategy realization is difficult for organizations, (2) broad strategy was difficult to translate into specific

action, (3) making choices was difficult, (4) actions (which are asked) of employees often did not have a clear connection with the strategy, (5) the realization of strategy comes on top of workload and (6) triggering employees to contribute to the realization is challenging. After pinpointing these challenges, there was decided to focus on the troublesome activity of triggering the employee to contribute to the strategy, since a solution for this lies in the reach of this master thesis.

THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE EMPLOYEE

Insight into the perspective of the employee on the strategic realization phase provided knowledge on how to improve their motivation for strategy realization. Three parts of this perspective were researched: the influence of the organizational context the employee functions in, the employees' experience of the strategy and general motivators of the employee.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT OF THE EMPLOYEE

The behaviour which is expected of the employee varies amongst organizations due to differences in their approach to strategy realization. Three different models were established in which different behaviours are expected of the employee, these are: listen and execute, learn and grow, and experiment and take risks. For all three situations the triggering of the employees should be executed in different ways. During the empirical research it was found that four different actors have an influence on the course of the realization: the individual, the team, the manager and the client. The individual actor was discovered to consist of three person's that should be triggered differently, these were: the opportunist, the baker and the resistor.

THE EMPLOYEES' EXPERIENCE OF THE STRATEGY

The majority of the employees are first confronted with the strategy when it is communicated with the entire organization. A change framework consisting of four phases was found to represent the journey of the employee from the moment of receiving the communication to the transition into action. Provided that a certain degree of

belonging is felt by the employee, four phases are experienced: awareness, understanding, acceptance, and action. The empirical research proved the framework valid and uncovered that the transition into the acceptance phase was experienced as the most challenging. Therefore, improving the facilitation of the acceptance phase was expected to improve the triggering of the employee for strategy realization. For this to happen, it should be more clear what the influence of the strategy is on the day-to-day situation of the employee.

THE MOTIVATION OF AN EMPLOYEE

Three factors were found in the literature which influence the motivation of employees, these are: having a purpose, improving mastery in a skill and having autonomy over their work. These factors were considered in the design of the solution.

THE INCLUSIVE STRATEGY REALIZATION CANVAS KIT

A holistic and practical solution was designed to facilitate organizations in triggering their employees to adventure in strategy realization.

This solution is based on the idea of enhancing the employees' intrinsic motivation by creating a win-win situation for them and the organization, see Figure 1. Through six steps the organization is facilitated in linking the personal development of the employee to the strategic objectives which addresses the intrinsic motivation of the employee. In the designed trajectory, the organization is aided in the specification of their strategy by determining which skills and capabilities are needed for the realization. Next, the employees are guided in the discovery of their desired skills and ambitions. Lastly, the canvas kit facilitates the process of making a connection between the employees' desires in development and the skills required for the realization of the strategy.

VALIDATION

Finally, the design was (partly) validated with an organization, employees and two experts on strategy realization. However, to fully validate the effect of canvas kit and the intended win-win situation, the product should be tested in real-life strategy processes.

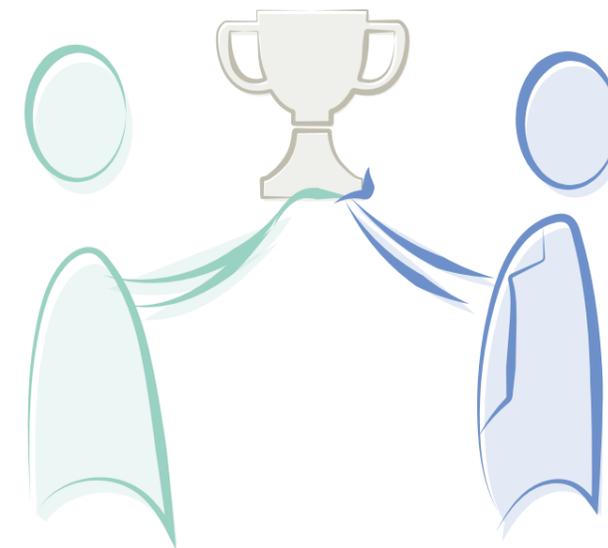


Figure 1: A solution bases on a win-win situation between the organization and the employee



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PROJECT INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The world we live in is changing at an increasingly faster rate. As is presented in Figure 2, more and more developments take place in the world simultaneously which creates highly dynamic market contexts for organizations. In this new world many business leaders are faced the question of how to stay competitive and grow profitably amid this increasing turbulence and disruption. Organizations across all industries are struggling to keep up with the accelerating pace of change, let alone get ahead of it (Kotter, 2014). The change in behaviour of customers, competitors, and suppliers, as well as regulation, risk, and market dynamics (Boyd, 2018), ask for the continuous creation of relevant propositions addressing future market needs. If not, organizations will be overtaken by other organizations which make them end up sitting on the side-lines as nimbler competitors beat them. Thus, it is important for organization to look forward in the future and understand and evaluate technological, socioeconomic, and geopolitical forces in order to predict how they can maintain their competitive position. The ability to constantly adapt to emerging challenges and opportunities is increasingly relevant, given the increased globalization (Fernandez & Fernandez, 2008). Solutions have been found in applying strategy in organizational settings, since strategy concerns the inseparability of organization and environment and is built on an anticipation of the future operating environment (Biggadike, 1981; Boyd, 2018; Lenz, 1980).

The organizational strategy often describes the long-term direction which prepares the company for the key issues faced in the future (G. Johnson, Whittington, Scholes, Angwin, & Regnér, 2011). Using strategy in an organization has become thus more popular since more organizations feel the need to prepare for the future. Although the use of strategy is proven to be promising for dealing with changing environments, organizations struggle to implement strategy successfully and therefore miss the full benefits the approach can bring (Chaffee, 1985). In order to realize these plans for shaping the future organization implementation is crucial. Many organizations struggle with translating strategy into specific action which is demonstrated by Crittenden & Crittenden (2008) who found that 66% of the organizational strategy is not implemented caused by a “strategy-to-performance gap”.

(Source: Kotter, 2014)

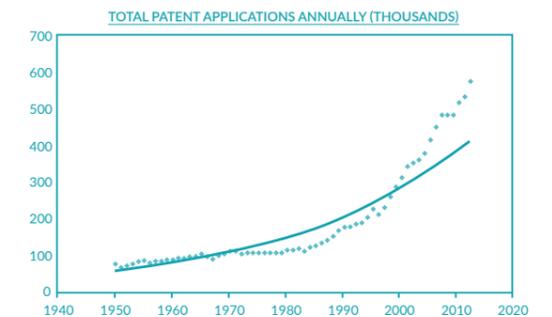


Figure 2: Proof of an increasingly faster changing world

Implementation of strategy seems difficult, according to Olsson (2015) one of the main concerns is effective communication of the strategy throughout the organization. After making the strategic plans, for the realization of it, many employees are needed and willing to promote the defined goals. Although an organization's strategy consists of decisions which are made by its highest level of management, it affects the organization as a whole (Ackoff, 1974). Thus, As stated by Crittenden & Crittenden (2008) successful strategy implementation requires the input and cooperation of all employees. Kaplan & Norton (2005) show that 95% of the employees in an organization are not informed on the current organizational strategy or do not understand the content of it. How can they contribute when they are not properly informed or involved?

Two problems are described; translating the formulated strategy into implementation and creating support amongst employees for the realization. Thus, it is important to focus on informing and involving all employees in an organization in order to make the realization of strategy a success (Kalpan & Norton, 2005).

PROJECT RELEVANCE

This thesis focusses on the gap between hopeful strategy forming of organizations in order to deal with the increasingly changing environment and the disappointing results when the realization phase touched upon. Thus, in order to create movement in an organization by stimulating realization of the strategy, employees must be informed and see the relevance to turn the strategy into reality. A practical approach to perform this informing and showing the relevance to operational employees could improve strategy

I. INTRODUCTION

project introduction | project description | introduction Strategiemakers

Strategy realization is often a hurdle for organizations. While strategy is proven to increase in importance in order to stay relevant in the market, strategy realization is still difficult to accomplish. Part of difficulties are caused by the fact that not all members of an organization contribute to strategy realization which is proven to be crucial for making it a success (Kaplan & Norton, 2005). Informing and involving all employees appropriately is experienced as difficult yet crucial for strategy realization to become a success. This thesis presents a solution on better informing and involving employees in strategy realization.

realisation. In this thesis a solution on how to inform and involve employees to improve strategy realization will be presented.

A PRACTICAL APPROACH

The topic of strategy realization is generally approached theoretically in the literature making it often difficult to translate in practice (Vásquez, Bencherki, Cooren, & Sergi, 2018). Practitioners have also contributed to solutions for this problem, but practice-based books often consist of vast amount of short practical tips which are easily forgotten. Practical models for strategic developers are addressed in literature, (e.g. the strategic alignment model (Avison, Jones, Powell, & Wilson, 2004). All the while the realization of strategy often is done by more operational employees (Crittenden, Crittenden, 2008). A practical solution focused on operational employees is needed.

In this thesis the strategic process was investigated through literature and experiences in practice. Challenges that can occur in the strategic process were discovered in a case-based research, and challenges that influenced the amount of strategy realization by employees were mapped. With the knowledge of the practical and theoretical insights, a practical solution was designed for organizations on how to motivate employees for strategy realization.

The theoretical problem was addressed by applying the principles of Design Thinking in order to reach a practical and validated solution. Design thinking is an approach in which one tries to learn by investigating existing situations and applying those insights to ideate on new solutions (Kolko, 2015). Accordingly, insights were gathered on the experience of employees in practice, which formed a different view on the challenges. Accommodated by these insights, many ideas were formed of possible practical solutions. The most promising idea was chosen, developed further and validated in practice which resulted in a few iterations on the solution. The insights gained during this journey and the final product is presented in this report.

How to improve strategy realisation by motivating employees to take action?

Figure 3: The main research question

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PROJECT SCOPE

The project scope was defined on 3 pillars; Strategiemakers, a generalized solution and strategy. These are defined as follows:

Strategiemakers

This master thesis was made in collaboration Strategiemakers, a strategy consultancy firm. The created solution is designed to fit in their approach and match with the type of clients of Strategiemakers.

Generalized solution

The project aimed to deliver a generalized a tool/ method for all organizations to improve strategy realization. This tool should be usable by many different organizations to improve their realization process. Furthermore, it should also be usable by Strategiemakers when helping their clients. Since Strategiemakers' clients are often large which makes strategy realization more difficult because of the scale of employees to involve, the solution has a focus on large organizations.

Strategy

Strategy is an ambiguous term. This project focussed on strategy as the long-term direction which prepares the company for the key issues faced in the future. It focussed on strategy in an organizational setting where it is seen as a way to improve how organizations compete in the marketplace, obtain competitive advantage, and gain market share.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The aim of this thesis was to develop a method that helps organizations in involving their employees in the realization of their strategy. The method was designed to be usable for Strategiemakers when helping their clients with the strategic process.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question that was answered in this master thesis is presented below.

The main research question is divided in three questions addressed in different phases of the project, which are defined below. Each of these are approached using a method that best suits the question.

1. How do strategic plans translate into actions according to scientific research?

- What steps are taken by organizations between forming strategy and realization?
- What factors play signification roles in organizations during strategy realization?

2. In what ways does strategy realisation take place in practice?

- How does the theoretical model interact with approaches on strategy realisation by several organizations in practice?
- What challenges can be found in the strategy realisation process?

3. How can employees be facilitated in strategy realisation during their daily work?

- Which solutions can be found to facilitate employees in strategy realization on a regular basis?
- How can the found solution be improved to facilitate employees better in the strategy realization process?

PROJECT LAYOUT

In order to answer the previously stated questions, a version of the double diamond approach can be found in Figure 4. This Design Thinking method consists of the parts: discover, define, develop, deliver (Nessler, 2018). Many iterations will be made between the different phases and each stage will build on the information obtained in the previous stage.

Discover: during the discover phase the problem at hand is approached from different angles. Relevant fields around the initial research question are explored in order to get an elaborate view on what factors are of influence on the problem.

Define: in this stage the insights gathered in the discover phase are synthesized. The research question is re-framed to address a more specific defined research question. The re-framed question is described in a design brief along with a description of the requirements of the solution.

Develop: this is an ideation stage in which ideas

are gathered able to solve the problem. The design brief is used to measure which solutions are most suitable in solving the problem.

Deliver: within this phase a process of prototyping, testing and iterating is applied. In this way the solution found in the previous phase is tested and improved in order to evolve. The last version will be delivered as a final product.

DOUBLE DIAMOND APPROACH

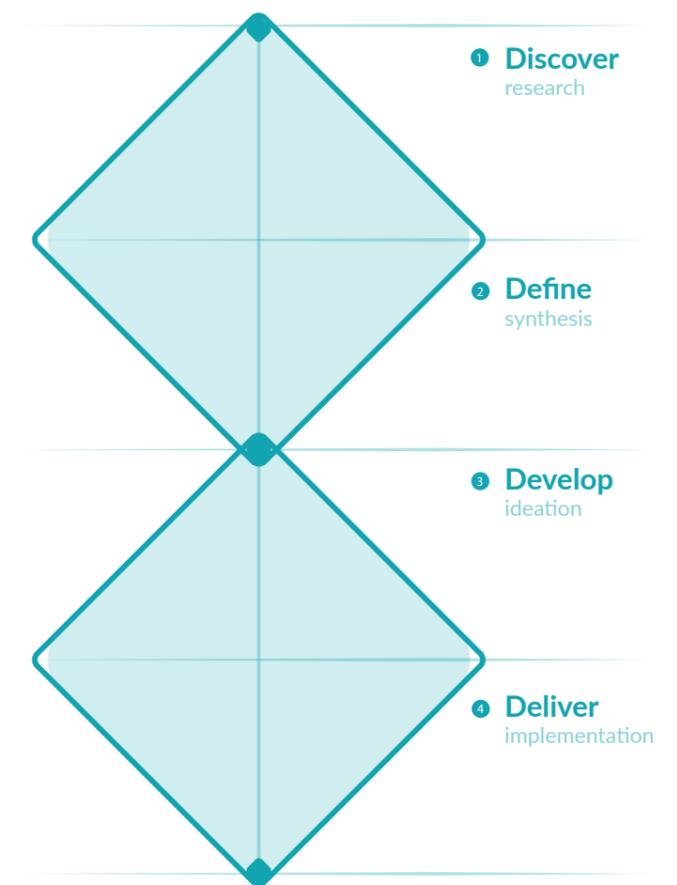


Figure 4: Double diamond process approach

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

In the project layout the outlines of the project, according to the double diamond design method, were presented. In this chapter the research methods used during the master thesis will be elaborated. The methods are introduced, and their goals and contribution to the project are explained. Next, an overview of the organizations included in the empirical research is given. Afterwards there is presented how the empirical and analytical parts of the research are structured in the report will be presented.

approach which features the Design Thinking method (Figure 5). First a deeper understanding was needed on the topics of strategy and strategy realisation. This was done during the first part of **analytical research**. The theoretical models found in the literature during this phase were used as a basis in the **empirical research** phase. During this part there was tried to grasp what the strategy process looks like in practice and what the experience of strategy is among employees. The insights gathered in both parts were the input for the **design phase** where a solution to the problem was formed and validated in practice.

The activities done for this project consist of of three parts, based on the double diamond

ACTIVITIES PERFORMED DURING THE THESIS

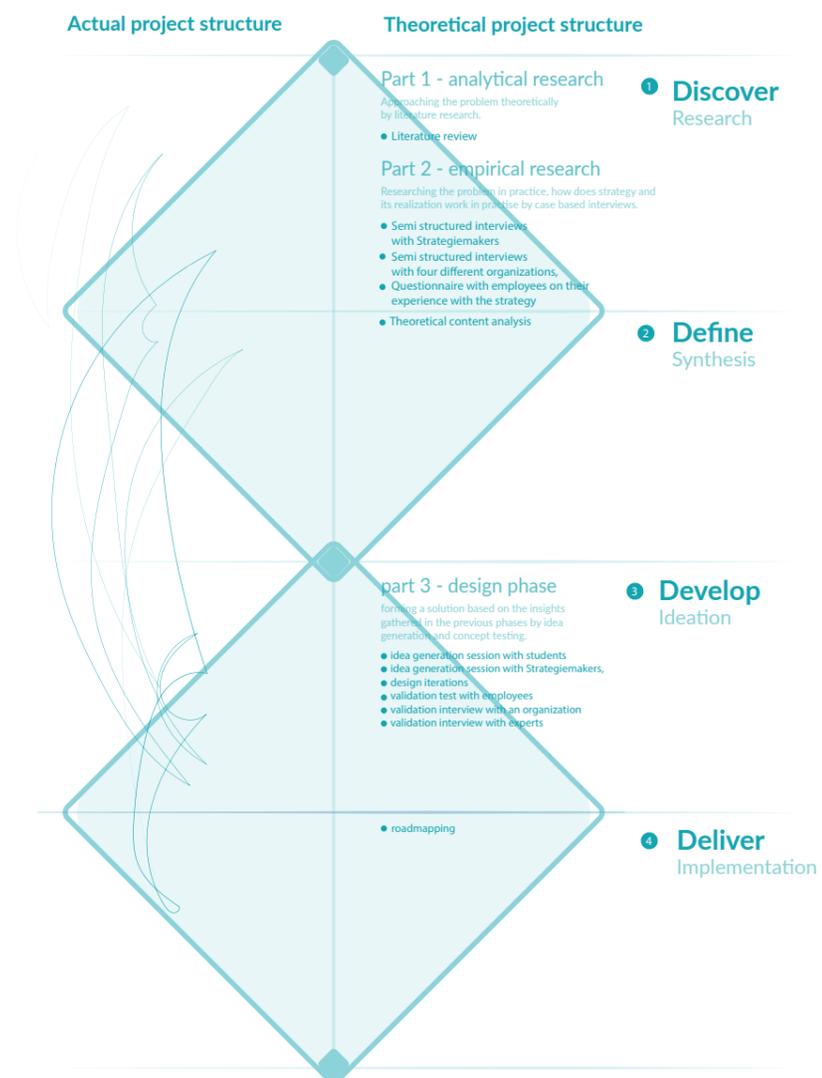


Figure 5: Project structure of the thesis Source (Nessler, 2018)

II. METHOD

Research activities | parts of the thesis | organizations in the study | Structure of the report

The approach used to develop a solution for involving employees in strategy realization is based on the double diamond approach. This Design Thinking method is used as a basis and appropriate complementary methods were matched to gain the right insights. These methods can be divided into three types: analytical research methods, empirical research methods and design methods. The theoretical insights gathered in the analytical phase and the practical insights attained in the empirical phase are used during the design phase in order to create a practical solution to improve strategy realization.

PARTS OF THE THESIS

The methods used during the three different parts are presented below.

PART 1- ANALYTICAL RESEARCH

Literature review on strategy and its realization

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the strategic process a literature review was done. During this review the general strategy process, strategy realization, general organizational structures and human drivers were explored. Existing theoretical models of strategy and its realization and the difficulties of this process were looked at. The sources used for some topics are somewhat old, but the information is still relevant in organizations. It covers important aspects of organizations, which are still clearly recognizable in present-day organizations. Research of this time is still based on similar categorization, i.e. (Falkheimer & Heide, 2018; Johanson, 2019).

PART 2 – EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Semi-structured interviews with Strategiemakers

To understand the strategic process that Strategiemakers uses when forming strategy with clients, four Strategiemakers were interviewed and around ten unofficial coffee conversations were held. These provided an initial idea of how strategy is applied in organizations in practice and what hurdles already identified by Strategiemakers. The interviews were held in person and typically lasted 40 minutes. A semi-structured topic guide (Appendix A) was slightly altered after each of the interviews. The alteration was needed because some initial questions required knowledge about the processes after the forming the strategy which was not known by the interviewees. Summaries of the interviews were written and insights were formed by drawing comparisons. The results of the interview created the basis of understanding of strategy in practice and the way of working at Strategiemakers. These insights are presented in the chapter 'Strategiemakers'. The information was gathered also used during the design phases to match the designed product with the way of working at Strategiemakers.

Case-based semi-structured interviews

To gain a better understanding of the strategy process in practice, this process was researched in four organizations. Due to time constraint and the increasing amount of repetition in answers, no more organizations were researched. These organizations were chosen because of their deviation in sectors and organizational approaches, and their similarity in their current position in the strategic process, i.e. the beginning of the realization phase. More information on the organizations is found in the next sub-chapter. Due to the variation between the organizations, applicability of the solution is broadened. This is desirable because Strategiemakers has a broad range of clients. In every organization a minimum of two people were interviewed; one managerial employee and one operational employee, for an overview see Figure 6. In total, eleven people were interviewed. The interviews typically lasted for an hour and were located at the organization. The topic guide that was used can be found in Appendix B. The interviews were recorded and three different kinds of insights were extracted from the recording: a time-line of the strategic process, challenges faced during strategy realization and additional insights into the theoretical model found in the literature. An overview of the time-line analysis is displayed in Appendix C. For the insights into the challenges and the theoretical model, statement cards were extracted from the recordings and 'an analysis on the wall' was performed (Sanders & Stappers, 2013). This analysis resulted in an overview of the challenges faced during strategy realization in practice and some insights into and additions to the theoretical model from the literature. A description of the analysis and an elaborate overview of the insights can be found in Appendix C, the pinpointed challenges are presented in the sub-chapter 'the challenges of strategy realization in practice'. The insights gained from the case-based interviews form the foundation for the information given in all practical parts of the chapters. Besides the three main insight mentioned above they are also used to obtain an abstract understanding of the context and to list the requirements in the design brief on what the design of the solution should contain.

Alongside the semi-structured interviews, the case organizations were used to measure how their employees were informed and how they were involved in the current strategy by means of a questionnaire. The questions were based on an existing questionnaire used in the research done by Linke & Zerfass (2011) on the topic of organizational change. By measuring the behaviour representative for every phase in the form of questions, the employees involvement can be measured. The phases of the same theoretical model that was used in this thesis makes them applicable to this research. The questions were framed in order to measure the employees' involvement in relation to the strategy and its realization. In some cases, the questionnaire was filled in digitally and yet other cases a hard copy was used. In total 40 employees completed the questionnaire. The questionnaire and its raw data can be found in Appendix D. The results and insight gained from the questionnaire are presented in the chapter "employee experience" and are used to choose the most impactful design direction.

PART 3-DESIGN PHASE

Creative session with design students

Many solutions to the challenges presented by the strategy realization process were found though of during the research phases. These can be found in Appendix E. To look beyond the scope of my own ideas, a co-creation session was organized with five design students. The problem identified in the strategy realization process was used to generate ideas on several solution spaces. The ideas were used as inspiration for the concept. The session plan and the ideas which were generated can be found in Appendix F.

Creative session with Strategiemakers

To use the expertise of the Strategiemakers in the problem solving process, a co-creation session was organized with some of them. In a session lasting an hour, many ideas were generated to discover how employees could link their passions to the strategic goals. Their expertise was also used to gather information on what characteristics the solution should contain in order to increase the chance of success in practice. The session plan and the ideas which were generated are provided in Appendix F.

Design iterations

After gathering the ideas of external persons on the problem, a conceptual direction was chosen as the most promising. To improve the quality of the concept, many iterations were performed before it

became the design which is presented as the final product. Activities which provided input on the improvements of the concept were: meetings with my supervisors at TU Delft, a session with two experts on organizational culture and meaningful leadership inside of Strategiemakers, and meetings with my supervisor at Strategiemakers. All of these activities contributed to the development of the concept into the final product which is presented.

Validation

Next to the iterative activities, validations of the concept were made with people who have experience related to the topic of the concept. Three different validations were performed:

- A validation at Strategiemakers for validation from the employee perspective. The skill canvas, ambition canvas and strategy contribution canvas were tested. The test focused on improving of the design of the canvasses, the value of the concept for the employee, the expectation of increased realization of strategy and the relevance for Strategiemakers. A full review of this validation can be found in Appendix H.
- Two one-hour interviews with independent experts were held. One expert was a consultant on a specific strategy realization methodology (OKR) who focussed on start-ups and on ING. The second expert was a professor at the Erasmus University of Rotterdam who focused on leadership and communication, in particular on innovation and operational settings. The value for the employee, and for organizations was discussed, the practicality of the canvasses was reviewed and a there was speculation on what the influence of the concept will be on the amount of realized strategy.
- A one-hour interview with an organization was held to validate the organizational value. Besides this, the client of Strategiemakers was also used to get an idea of the usefulness of the canvasses and the possible increase in realized strategy was discussed.

The insights gained from the validations were used for further iterations on the concept (presented in the sub-chapter 'design development process') and validation on the thought principle behind the concept. These insights can be found in the sub-chapter 'validation'.

Roadmapping

A roadmap with recommendations for further development and implementation of the concept was made for Strategiemakers. This proposed future path is presented in the sub-chapter 'implementation'.

ORGANIZATIONS IN CASE STUDY

As noted in the last chapter four organizations were used to research the strategic process in practice. In Figure 6 below, these organizations are introduced. The similarity in the cases was their position in the strategic process, i.e. the beginning of the realization phase, which made them comparable which is needed to obtain general insights. The differences in the cases in sectors and in organizational approaches made the results of the case-bases research transferable to a broad spectrum of organizations. In one case the strategy of the department was researched while

in the other cases the organizational strategy was used. Since Strategiemarkers was involved in the formation of the departmental strategy, including this case would give relevant insights on their approach. This case can still be used along the others because in the comparison of the strategic time-line the strategic processes were proven to be similar. In every organization a managerial and an operational employee were interviewed to get a diverse insight in the situation. Their position is displayed in Figure 6. Due to confidentiality their strategies are not shared.

			
<p>CASE INTRODUCTION</p> <p>ABN AMRO is a multinational banking and financial services corporation with a primary focus on Northwest Europe. They serve clients in the retail, private banking and corporate banking sectors. The department of End User Services (EUS) was interviewed since Strategiemarkers helped them form their strategy a half a year ago. This department ensures that all employees of the company are supported in their soft- and hardware needs. EUS used a vision and many priorities to guide their activities and used the scrum technique (based on epics) to describe their tasks.</p>	<p>TU Delft is a technical university which with eight faculties and numerous research institutes which all contribute to the expansion of technological knowledge. Four employees of the faculty of Industrial Design Engineering were interviewed which were all involved with the realization of the university wide strategy. No particular technique besides the strategy is used to divide work activities.</p>	<p>Royal Haskoning DHV is a worldwide engineering and project management and consultancy firm which is located in 150 countries to work with clients to successfully deliver projects which contribute to improving living circumstances around the world for 135 years. Two employees high up the food chain were interviewed which were actively involved in the realization of the organizational strategy. Also in this case No particular technique besides the strategy is used to divide work activities.</p>	<p>The ING Group is a multinational banking and financial services corporation. Their primary businesses are retail, direct, commercial, and investment banking, asset management, and insurance services. Three employees of the mortgage department were interviewed on the realization of the organizational strategy. In the majority of the organization the Spotify method is used to increase agility in work activities.</p>
<p>TYPE OF STRATEGY</p> <p>Department strategy Six strategic themes</p>	<p>Organizational strategy Four strategic themes</p>	<p>Organizational strategy Three strategic themes</p>	<p>Organizational strategy Three strategic themes</p>
<p>ESTIMATED POSITION OF INTERVIEWEES IN THE ORGANIZATION</p>			
			

16 | Figure 6: Overview of interviewees in researched cases

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

As described in Figure 5 empirical and analytical research was done during this graduation project. This report presents the results of this research and the designed solution. In order to present the results in a logical way, the layout of the report is different from the chronological way the research was done. In Figure 7 below, an overview of the structure of the report is given. The results of the analytical and empirical research are presented according to topics. This approach is chosen to provide a logical storyline. **The results of the analytical research are presented in blue, the results of empirical research are coloured green** and **the general chapters are coloured turquoise**. The thesis starts off with an analysis

of the company Strategiemarkers and next there is focused on the strategic process. Where, as a conclusion, triggering the employee is discovered as the main challenge which is focussed on in the rest of the thesis. Next there will be focused on the role of employee in strategy realization. Beginning with an overview of the organizational context they are in, followed by zooming in on the experience of the strategic process by employees and closing off with information on what motivates employees. After the results of the researches are presented the proposed solution is described and the thesis is wrapped up with a conclusion and discussion.

REPORT STRUCTURE

	Topics	Key message
<p>Strategiemarkers</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy process of Strategiemarkers in practice • Values and beliefs of Strategiemarkers 	Requirement for the design to fit in the Strategiemarkers approach
<p>Strategy</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy process in theory • Strategy process in practice • Challenges in strategy realization in practice 	Triggering employees is the challenge focussed on in the rest of the thesis
<p>Context</p> <p>Employee</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context of strategy realization in theory • Context of strategy realization in practice 	An overview of how an individual can be embedded in organizations and the influence of this on the contribution to strategy realization
<p>Experience</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of strategy by employees in theory • Experience of strategy by employees in practice • Motivation of employees in theory 	The acceptance phase in the theoretical model of the strategy experience of employees is challenging in the experience model
<p>Design</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design brief • Design • Validation • Implementation • Conclusion, implications, limitations 	Mastery and purpose are important factors in employee motivation

Figure 7: Report structure

INTRODUCING STRATEGIEMAKERS

It was together with the consultancy firm Strategiemakers that the topic of strategy realization was determined for this thesis. As strategy realization is experienced as challenging for their clients, they desired more insight into this problem and a solution to improve the situation. In this chapter the company is introduced and their approach to strategy as well as their key beliefs are described. These insights were used in the design phase to match the design with the way in which the organization works.

the translating of the strategy into reality. In order to help the firm to make more impact during the realization phase, more insights are required on the reasons why strategy realization is often difficult. Strategiemakers wishes to use the insights gained from this thesis when informing and supporting their clients on this subject.

DESIGN THINKING WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION

Besides their holistic approach to strategy, Strategiemakers also adds value for its clients by teaching the clients' employees to incorporate design thinking in their work approach. By going through the steps of: showing, doing together and doing independently (see Figure 10 on the next page) Strategiemakers ensures that the clients' employees learn the necessary skills to innovate by themselves. This is crucial for successful strategy realization since strategy often leads organizations into new directions where they have little expertise. The skills and tools they learn from Strategiemakers give them the opportunity to discover this still unknown ground and to innovate independently.

The growing consultancy firm Strategiemakers is located in Amsterdam and Utrecht. The company was founded in 2012 by two good friends who saw the potential in deeply embedding design thinking principles into business areas and working more efficiently by wasting less time on unnecessary paperwork. Now in 2019, the approximately 20 employees help clients in the fields of strategy, innovation and organization guided by the two principles shown in Figure 8. The organization differentiates itself from its competitors through its integrative process supported by its holistic 'Growth by Design' method (Figure 9). Where other consultancies usually only focus on forming the new strategy, Strategiemakers also helps its clients with the implementation of strategy that is formed. Their expertise on business organization helps organizations to design their own organizational structures in a way that simplifies

As stated above, the Growth By Design model shows how different facets of organizations are intertwined with each other and, as can be seen, strategy is just one aspect. The model confirms that

III. STRATEGIEMAKERS "nieuw denken, samen doen"

Introduction | Design thinking in the organization | Strategy according to Strategiemakers | The strategic process of Strategiemakers | General key beliefs | Key beliefs on strategy

This chapter presents the results of an analysis of Strategiemakers, the company for whom the solution was created. An introduction is provided of the different facets and beliefs of the organization, followed by an overview of the method with which they help their clients with strategy. It concludes with a summary of several areas in which the solution should match the approach of Strategiemakers.



Figure 8: The three fields Strategiemakers is active in

GROWTH BY DESIGN

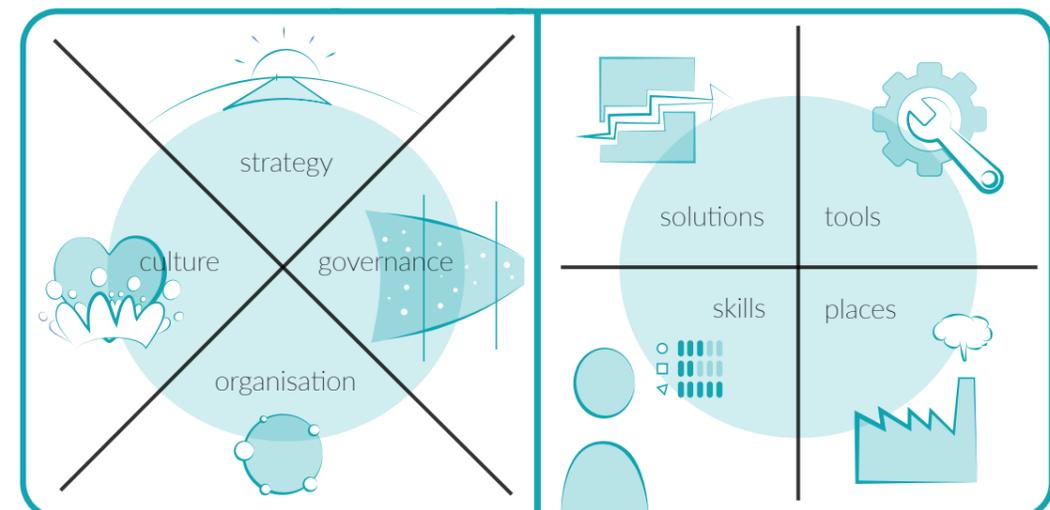


Figure 9: The inclusive Growth by Design method of Strategiemakers

to realize strategy in a successful way, factors such as culture, governance and organizational planning should be taken into account. This means that it is useful for Strategiemarkers to gain more knowledge of the hurdles in many facets of organizations with strategy realization.

It was important to gain an understanding of the mindset and strategic process of Strategiemarkers in order to design a fitting solution. Therefore, a short analysis was made to get insight into the Strategiemarkers' way of working. The method used when researching Strategiemarkers is presented in the 'Methods' chapter. The results explain their approach of creating strategy and formulating key insights on important beliefs held by Strategiemarkers. These are presented below.

STRATEGY ACCORDING TO STRATEGIEMAKERS

Strategy is seen by Strategiemarkers as a method by which specific goals are set for the future of an organization. These goals take into account the development of the organization's market by creating a vision of the market of the future. How the organization wants to respond to this future vision is called its ambition. In order to realize this ambition the organization needs to develop several facets, these are expressed in terms of strategic themes. In Figure 11 an overview of this strategic approach can be found.

Strategiemarkers facilitates organizations in uncovering the strategic themes relevant to their specific market. By using several canvasses the relevant developments are pinpointed, together with employees of the clients' organization. Strategiemarkers gives them tips and asks critical questions on the realisation of these themes. Depending on the scope of the contract, the organization itself is responsible for the realisation. How vision, ambition and strategic themes are defined through workshops will be explained next.

STRATEGIEMAKERS' WAY OF EDUCATING CLIENTS ON INNOVATION SKILLS

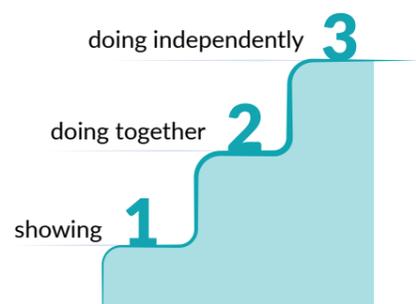


Figure 10: Education of clients on skills

THE STRATEGIC PROCESS OF STRATEGIEMAKERS

When Strategiemarkers is hired by a client to guide them in creating new strategy they start by explaining the core principles of an ideal strategic process in an organization. In Figure 12 it is shown that this strategic process is built up of two parts: vision & strategy and organization & realization. Strategiemarkers believes that strategy should not be a linear process but that it should rather be continuously revised.

The steps Strategiemarkers guides its clients through are also described in Figure 12. After the themes have been determined, the organization is guided in the validation of the most critical assumptions and/or helped with the translation to specific action points and with the setting up of the right changes for innovation to happen. Occasionally, methods are created to measure progression in the realization of the themes.

Depending on the type of organization of the client, different tools are used to help them discover their strategic themes. A selection of tools is listed in Figure 12. The tools are listed under the corresponding steps but some can be used on many occasions. In Figure 15 some of the canvasses are displayed.

In the graph at the bottom of Figure 12, is displayed what fields of Strategiemarkers are touched upon during every step in the strategic process. From this overview it is concluded that all three fields are important for a successful strategy process. This means that strategy is not the only field of Strategiemarkers which is important in the strategic process but that knowledge on organizational structures and innovation is also relevant.

STRATEGY ACCORDING TO STRATEGIEMAKERS

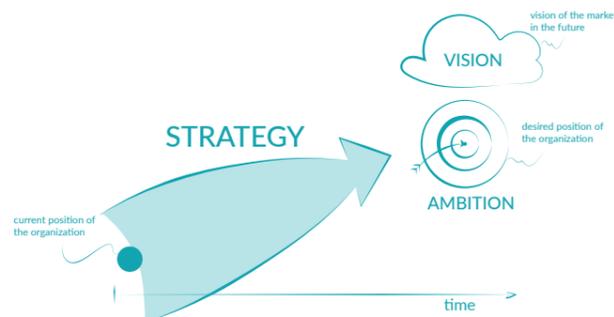


Figure 11: Strategy approach of Strategiemarkers

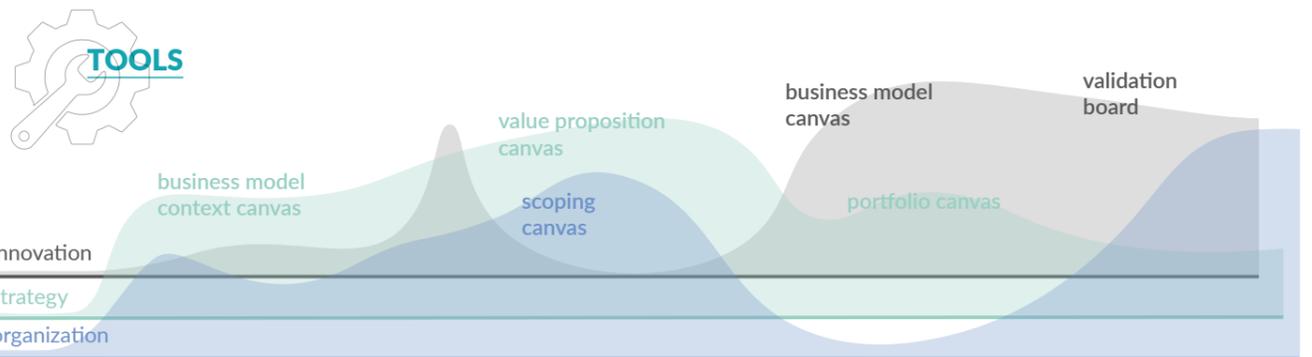
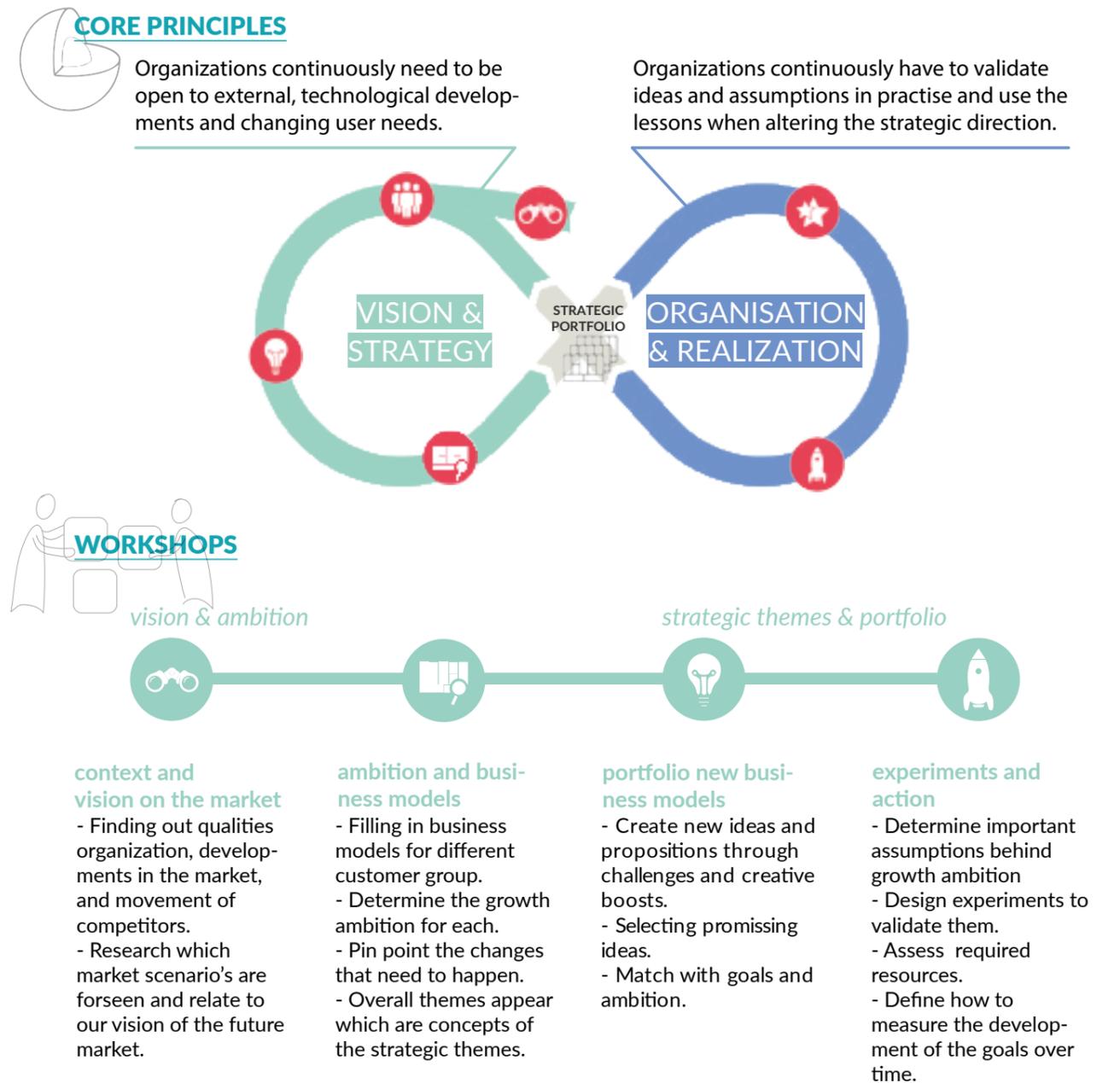


Figure 12: The strategic process of Strategiemarkers

KEY BELIEFS OF STRATEGIEMAKERS

From the four Strategiemarkers who were interviewed and around ten unofficial coffee conversations which were held, a few key beliefs of Strategiemarkers were extracted. These beliefs give an overview of the framework into which the solution should fit. The beliefs are categorized according to general beliefs and beliefs related to their approach on strategy. A brief description of the beliefs is provided below and an overview is given in Figure 13 and Figure 14.

General key beliefs of Strategiemarkers

1. Strategiemarkers rejuvenates organizations not by making big plans but by providing practical tools and skills through which organizations can continuously develop.
2. Strategiemarkers teaches clients these skills by showing, doing together and doing independently. These are based on design thinking and lean start-up methods.
3. Strategiemarkers believes in rejuvenation through the three inseparable fields of: innovation, organization, strategy. Where good strategy gives direction to the innovation and good organizational design enables the realization.
4. Strategiemarkers believes in continuous iterations between strategic planning to realization and back. They help clients to remain relevant to their customers by teaching them how to develop and validate propositions quickly and be focussed. Along with this, they teach that

it is valuable not to be afraid of getting your hands dirty early in the process and correcting the strategic direction when appropriate.

Key beliefs of Strategiemarkers on strategy

1. Strategiemarkers believes strategy should be a continuous process, as depicted in Figure 12, in which the suitability of the strategic priorities is validated with the external development in the market quarterly instead of once every few years. This will keep the organization consistently relevant.
2. Strategiemarkers believes it is important to form strategy together with as many employees as possible. This is perceived to create more initial support for the realization within the organization. Beside this reason, when co-creating strategy with operational employees, they provide input based on experiences gained from their work environment which can function as an early validation of the strategy.
3. Strategiemarkers believes in stimulating employees by giving them more autonomy. This is proven through agile methods i.e. the Spotify model and Holocracy models that trust in employees and give them more freedom to fill in their tasks stimulates innovative culture and change. Viewed this way, the rejuvenation of organizations lies in the hands of the employees; their capabilities should be managed in a stimulating way.

GENERAL KEY BELIEFS OF STRATEGIEMAKERS



Figure 13: General key beliefs of Strategiemarkers

KEY BELIEFS OF STRATEGIEMAKERS ON STRATEGY



Figure 14: Key beliefs of Strategiemarkers on strategy

TOOLS: CANVASES

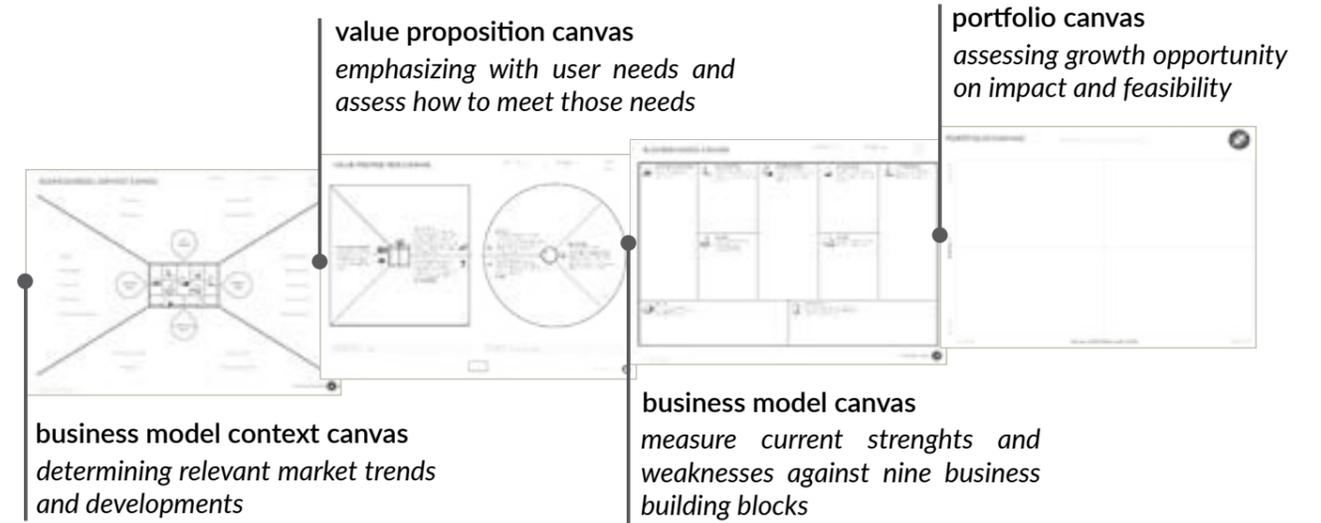


Figure 15: Examples of canvasses used by Strategiemarkers

CONCLUSION STRATEGIEMAKERS

Strategiemarkers

This thesis is of value to Strategiemarkers because strategy realization is a problem for their clients and Strategiemarkers would like to help its client to solve this problem. For the solution to fit Strategiemarkers it should:

- Match the current approach to the strategic process they use with clients
- Match the key beliefs of Strategiemarkers
- Match the key beliefs on strategy by Strategiemarkers

STRATEGY IN THEORY

The word strategy originates from the Greek word “generalship” (Webster’s ninth new collegiate dictionary, 1984). The term came into use in the 6th century C.E. in East Roman terminology, which implies that the idea of strategy has already existed for a long time (Freedman, 2015). The first use of strategy was in describing the planned approach during the act of war. Afterwards the use of planned approaches was also adopted in many other fields.

Although ‘strategy’ became a common known term, reaching a consensus on its definition appears to be difficult (Mirabeau & Maguire, 2014; Chaffee, 1985). This is mainly because strategy must be situational, and thus varies by industry. Beside this, the multidimensionality of the term also makes it difficult to come to a general agreement on its meaning (Hambrick, 1983, as cited in Chaffee, 1985). In this chapter, two interpretations of strategy will be taken into account; one general interpretation of strategy as a way of problem solving and one focussing on strategy in an organizational setting.

STRATEGY FOR GENERAL PROBLEM SOLVING

Strategy, in a general way, can be seen as a comprehensive and exhaustive analysis prior to decision making, also known as the rational model (Hart, 1992). This rational model implies that a decision maker (a) considers all available options, (b) identifies and evaluates all of the results which would follow from the choice of each option, and (c) selects the option that would be favoured in terms of the most valued result (Meyerson & Banfield, 1955, as cited in Hart, 1992). So, instead of immediately executing solutions to a problem, strategic problem solving involves first thinking about possible actions and their consequences before acting.

According to Rumelt (2011), dealing with problems strategically consists of three parts, which are together called ‘the Kernel of Strategy’.

THE KERNEL OF STRATEGY



Source: (Rumelt, 2011)

Figure 16: The kernel of strategy

The three parts consist of a **diagnosis**, a **guiding policy** and an **action plan**. In the first step the diagnosis describes or explains the nature of the challenge. A good diagnosis simplifies a complex problem. In the guiding policy an overall approach to cope with the challenge is formed. It is a broad plan for dealing with the challenge or overcoming its obstacles. The detailed and coherent execution of the guiding policy is formed in the action plan. These steps coordinate with each other and work together to accomplish the strategy. An example problem will be used to clarify these steps:

This is an example of a father having trouble with a son behaving badly at home (Iqbal, 2012).

1 Diagnosis: he only behaves this way at home. Is it because he is bored or because not enough discipline is provided by the parents? When investigating further it appears that most poor/disruptive behaviour is a result of poor relationships. The diagnosis is: the bad behaviour originates from a bad relationship between the father and son.

2 Guiding policy: improve the relationship between the father and son on a structural basis.

3 Action plan: sign up for a weekly golfing class with my son. Make sure I’m home for dinners to spend more quality time together. Ask relationship-enhancing questions during the time we see each other.

By going through these steps, the problem is solved in a holistic way. During the strategic approach, trade-offs among various elements must be coordinated and adjusted to reassure a desired outcome. With this approach the solutions are often more effective in environments where elements change due to additional participants. This is because one is capable of anticipating the behaviour of others in advance by thinking about several possible outcomes of the solution by using these steps (Rumelt, 2011).

In conclusion, problem solving in a strategic manner is characterized by first thinking about an approach and then acting. This thought process is divided into steps: diagnosis, guiding policy and action plan. This makes a strategy based solution superior to a mere plan or choice.

IV. STRATEGY

Strategy in theory | Detailing of the strategic steps in practice | Strategy in theory

In this chapter the concept of strategy in literature is explored and the translation of strategy into practice. Strategy is defined as a general way of problem solving and as a method for organizations to stay relevant in their competing market. According to literature, the strategic process can be divided into three steps: diagnose - guiding policy - action plan. The translation of this into an organizational setting was explored in the literature. After this theoretical approach on strategy, the observations of the strategic process in practice are discussed, which are based on the cases-based research of four organizations. The content of the defined strategic steps observed in practice is described and the strategic steps are further detailed into smaller steps. Besides the more detailed description of the strategic process, the challenges that were observed in the organizations are reviewed. Since the realization of the strategic process was found to be the most difficult part, a more profound overview is provided on the challenges experienced during this phase. Six main challenges are elaborated on. The challenge that is chosen for the focus for the rest of this thesis entails the triggering of employees to contribute to strategy realization.

STRATEGY IN AN ORGANIZATIONAL SETTING

While strategy in relation to war appeared around the 6th century C.E, it wasn't until the 1950s that strategy was first used in organization theory. In this area it is used to guide organizations to compete in the marketplace, obtain competitive advantage, and gain market share (Hatch, 1997). The benefits that a strategic approach has for organizations and how the use of strategy results in these positive effects is explained in this section.

Strategy is often used in organizations to explore how they can maintain their competitive position. Organizations feel they need to be able to adjust constantly to emerging challenges and opportunities. The increasing globalization makes this even more important (Fernandez & Fernandez, 2008). Since strategy concerns the inseparability of organization and environment, solutions are found in applying strategy in organizational settings (Chaffee, 1985). The strategic process enables the organization to control the environment to a certain extent and maintain the organization's autonomy. (Hallahan et al., 2007). Addressing a changing environment with a strategic approach gives organizations a structured method to address a difficult multidimensional problem and enables them to guide its direction of development in a substantiated way. Thus, using a strategic approach can provide structure to the chaos of options organizations have for their future development. The strategic approach also helps organizations to consciously step out of every day business and deliberately choose a direction to develop in.

In essence, a strategic approach is used by organizations to orientate themselves in the future market in and gives a more structured method to decide on their future development. The application of organizational strategy is

consists of two steps: **strategic thinking** and **strategic planning** (Mintzberg, Ghoshal, Lampel, & Quinn, 2003). The purpose of strategic thinking is to discover novel, imaginative strategies which can rewrite the rules of the competitive market and envision potential futures distinctive from the present. Strategic planning is to operationalize these envisioned strategies by linking facts about organizational resources to possible strategy approaches (Heracleous, 1998). The translation of visionary strategy, created in the strategic thinking part, into practice is done by the evaluation of financial and operational data that are linked to these strategic directions. Strategies are translated into detailed action plans by evaluating different options in execution, and their possible results in data. (Dye & Sibony, 2007). Comparing the approach on organizational strategy to the priorly proposed 'kernel' of strategy, strategic thinking is seen as a way of diagnosing the problem while the strategic planning is similar to forming a guiding policy and an action plan, see Figure 17.

Thus, organizational strategy consists of strategic thinking and strategic planning. It has the same basic structure as the strategic approach used in general problem solving. In the organizational setting, strategy is used to take into account the development of the organization's environment and to plan for obtaining a desirable place in the predicted future market.

PHASES OF STRATEGY IN AN ORGANIZATION

The steps in the 'kernel' of strategy: **diagnose**, **guiding policy** and **action plan**, are used to explore the process of organizational strategy. Since the strategic thinking and strategic planning are comparable with these steps, they are appropriate to use for exploring the strategic process of organizations. The content of each of the steps in the 'kernel' will be described in organizational setting:

Diagnose: the first step in development of strategy consists of research on the organization's environment to form an image of the context of the organization in which the nature of the challenge is defined and explained (Schaffner, 2011). By researching the organization's market segment and the trends and developments in that market segment, information on the organization's environment is gathered. To analyse the gathered information, for example, the classic SWOT analysis (Christensen, Andrews, Bower, Hamermesh, & Porter, 1982) could be performed or alternative business designs could be explored by, for example, using the business model canvas (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010). Business design could also include consideration of the customer value proposition, the scope of offerings, profit-capture mechanisms, and sources of competitive differentiation (Nadler, 2004). With the analysis of the organizations' environment a sharp definition of the nature of the challenge can be defined and explained.

Guiding policy: to use the insights which are gathered in the diagnosis phase, a guiding policy is formed which describes a global goal. The goal should be specific enough to give guidance when translating the strategy into details but should allow enough freedom for the possibility of different approaches. A few strategic themes are formed that describe the topics that the organization wants to focus on, which consider the organization's change of environment. The guiding policy also contains rules, regulations or other changes in the organization's approach which are set up in order to guarantee that the strategic themes are put into practice. A formal guidance of appropriate day-to-day decisions and action patterns is necessary for successful strategy realization. So, guiding policies which structurally provide prioritise that support strategy realization are crucial for the success of the strategy (Crittenden & Crittenden, 2008).

Action plan: during this phase the strategic plans are turned into specific action points which are directly realizable. The broadness of the formulation of the strategic themes allows

for many possible approaches for the realization, which gives employees who are assigned to the realization the freedom to fill in the realization as they find appropriate. A challenge in this phase is ensuring that the numerous actions resulting from the strategy realization correlate with each other in the big picture. For example, the sales team might want to meet sales goals by pleasing customers with rush orders while the manufacturing department would prefer long uninterrupted press runs (Schaffner, 2011). Cross-functional integration is key and in order to realize this organizational collaboration is needed (Crittenden & Crittenden, 2008).

In conclusion, in the diagnosis step the organization's environment is researched to get an idea of the future market. With this analysis a definition of the nature of the challenge that the organization can expect to face in the future can be defined and explained. During the guiding policy step, the insights gained are translated into strategic themes, regulations and other changes in the organisational approach that will enable the realisation of the strategy are decided on. The last step consists of the translation of these broad goals into a specific and coherent action plan.

These steps provide an explanation of the strategic process of organizations in general as described in literature but they do not give any insight into the challenges of the process. Since this process is experienced as difficult by the clients of Strategiemakers, the challenges of the process were researched in practice. In the next chapter the way in which the strategic process was experienced in practice by the four researched organisations and what challenges they were confronted with is discussed.

GENERIC STRATEGY VS. ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY

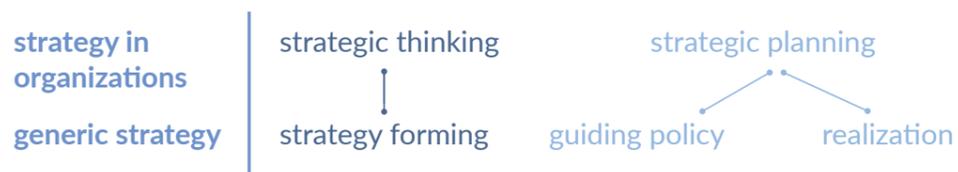


Figure 17: The generic approach to strategy compared to the two parts of organizational strategy

DETAILING OF THE STRATEGIC STEPS IN PRACTICE

In the previous chapter, three different phases of the strategic process were identified from literature.. But since the practical situation is often different from the theory, the strategic processes of four different organizations were researched in practice. This provided a better understanding of the process in reality and gave insight into the challenges that occur in practice. In this chapter it is explained how the four organizations filled in the details of the strategic steps. These are displayed in Figure 18, along with the challenges experienced in the step. The differences found in practice and literature will be explained for each step. Alternative names for the steps are suggested that reflect the content of the steps better in practice. The 'diagnosis' step is changed into 'strategy forming' and the step 'action plan' into realization. In Appendix C an elaborate overview is given of how each of the detailed steps were observed in every case, including an elaboration on differences and similarities between the cases.

DIAGNOSIS - STRATEGY FORMING

According to literature the goal of this step is to create a detailed overview of how the market in which the organisation is functioning will look in the future. Several methods are known to provide these insights. It was observed in all of the cases that the opinion of colleagues was valued in this stage opposed to methodical approaches. The researched organizations asked advice from employees on this matter, sometimes because of the experiences that they had gained on the operational side of the organization, and sometimes because they were knowledgeable on the topic. Other employees joined the discussion because they were enthusiastic and involved and they hoped to contribute to the future of the organization. In the case with TU Delft, the consultant that they hired to facilitate the strategic process did initial trend and development research prior to the sessions where input was gained from employees. In the other cases a minimal amount of objective research on the environment of the

organization was done. This means that in these three organizations the strategy was more based on the employees' opinions on the aimed future situation of the organization, instead of facts and Figures about the development of the market. None of the interviewees spoke about using existing methods as a SWOT analysis during the gathering of input.

the strategy forming phase consists of the divergence in the strategic process, in the policy phase choices were made on the final form of the strategic themes. Conceptual strategic themes were formed and at TU Delft and ABN AMRO they were tested to see if they resonated with the employees and to give the employees the feeling that they can influence the result.

"The strategy is on the one hand based on the knowledge and experience of the individual employees and on the other hand what we see happening in the world. Together that shows an emergency that fuels strategy. It is good to make sure that you have a complete picture. I would ask every advisory group to sum up relevant developments, things you see that you think our company should take into account." - RH DHV

"So, we iteratively we came to an conclusion and these conclusions are proposed again to everyone to make sure we get people on board and to make sure they feel involved. It never really bring about big changes, but now everyone had the chance to think about it"- TU Delft

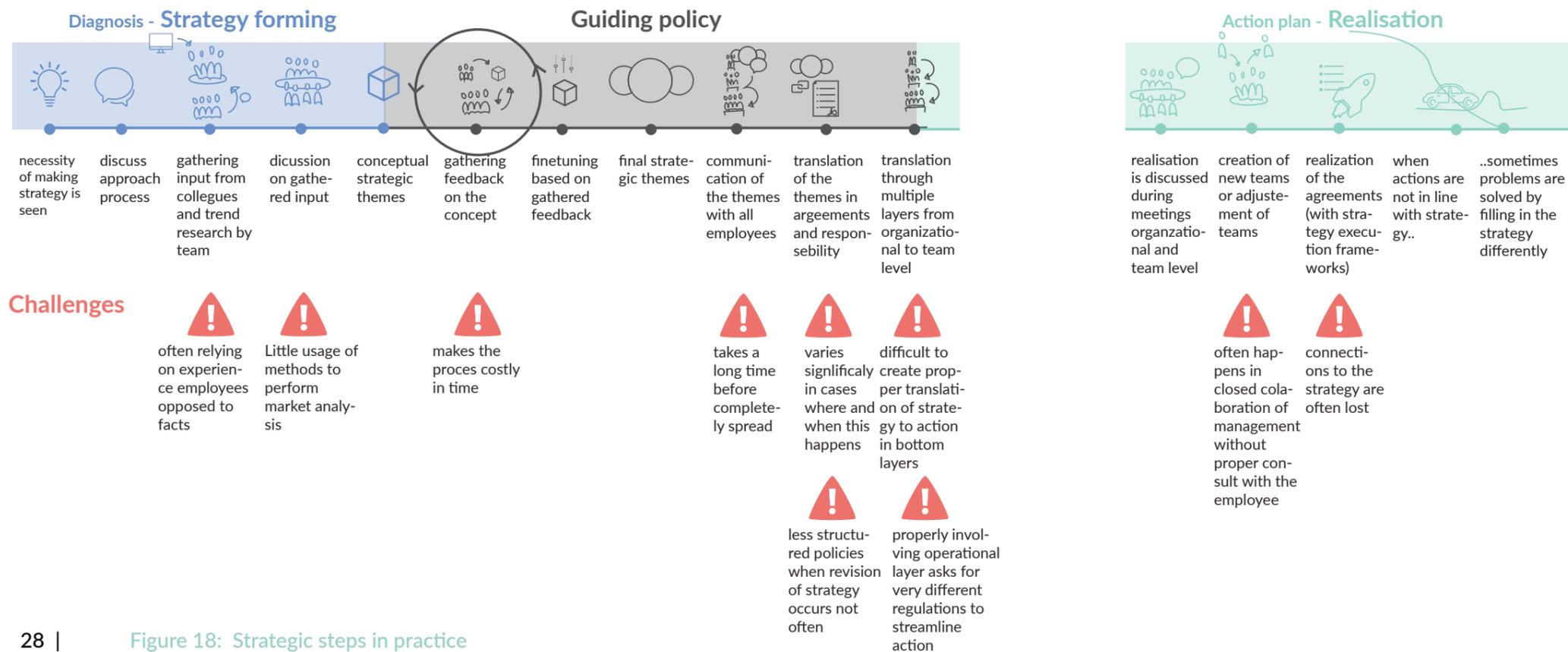
Thus, in practice the diagnosis phase is perceived in the four organizations as the strategy forming phase where the future market is determined mainly based on the expertise of employees.

GUIDING POLICY

As found in literature, the guiding policy exists of the definition of strategic goals and setting up policies that regulate the realization. While

After this last feedback round the final strategic themes were communicated thoroughly throughout the organization. The communication of strategy occurred in all four organizations with a snowball effect through the organizational layers. Managers presented the strategic themes to their employees, and they presented them to their teams. This continued for a while, depending on the size and organizational structure of the organization. RH DHV stated that the strategy took quite some time to fully spread throughout the organization since it had to pass through many layers.

DETAILED STEPS OF THE STRATEGIC PROCESS IN THE FOUR CASES



"After the forming the strategy it was communicated via the line of management by lots of communication, films, messages.. Telling and showing: these are the main topics These were communicated with the employees, advisory groups and also whole units. You really have to find your own way guided by these main topics, and then you translate those on your own way; what does it mean for your client or unit." - RH HDV

"You have to make sure it lands internally, that it's incorporated in the DNA of everyone" - ABN AMRO

After thorough communication about the chosen themes, there are three possible approaches that can be chosen for the realisation, depending on the amount of change to activities required. For the realization of strategic themes which differed significantly from the existing work content, new teams were formed in three of the cases. This entailed the repositioning of some employees or hiring new employees when the knowledge was not readily available in the existing workforce. The strategic themes that only required slight changes in activities, usually were assigned to the corresponding departments or teams. A specific

example of this occurred in the TU Delft case where the issue of stimulating students to be ambitious was noticed by the board of education. The third level of activity change was a change that was needed to be made in activities by the whole organization. Mostly this was done by taking up the topics of change in meetings throughout the organizations and deciding together what change could be done by the members of the team. In the interviews the impression was that these topics were mostly taken up voluntarily and were not managed which often made the process to realization messy.

"The groups beneath us have to think about how they can contribute from their group to optimally support that strategic cause. The strategic goals are being peeled in the sense of who is going to do it and who needs to be involved, which means are needed, timeline etc. For example, at HRM it means thinking about recruitment and selection." - TU Delft

The strategic process was often experienced in the cases as an unfamiliar and unstructured process, where it was common for them to use what they already knew in order to learn what would work. This unaccustomed approach was probably because in three of the cases, strategy was seen as a process only recurring once every few years. But in the case of ING, strategy is addressed every quarter. This resulted in a more structural approach to strategy, based on regulations in order to manage this process.

"I think we have lost some value, that there was more to get out of there but we are just getting to know the strategic process" - RH DHV

"We have a structural QBR approach with is executed every quarter where the squads fill in the realization themselves" - ING

Thus, in practice the guiding policy step was observed to exist from the communication of the strategy throughout the organization, the preparation for change in activities and the approach in regulations for this based on the reoccurrence of the strategy.

ACTION PLAN - REALISATION

In literature this phase was described as a translation of the vague strategic themes to specific realizable actions. It was discussed in literature that it is key during this process that all separate actions add up to a coherent overall picture. What was seen in the four cases was

that when strategy was translated into specific action points by operational employees, more regulations and agreements were needed in order to keep the realization of strategy structured, aligned and manageable. When the translation of the strategic themes is done by upper management, less regulations are needed because the overview of the strategic realisation is directly in the hands of the upper management. This was the case at TU Delft where the upper management translated the broad themes to specific action points. In the other case, when strategy is translated into specific action by operational employees, it is more difficult to keep track of the overall coherence within activities. In the case of ING all teams periodically had to think about what activities in their opinion had to be done to reach the periodically set goal. The management collected all the input provided by the teams and decided if all the activities would match and together would fulfil the periodical goal in mind. This elaborate communication on the planned activities required a high amount of regulations and guidance.

Therefore, aligning the realization process can be done by translating the broad themes into action by the upper management. This requires less regulations for realization because the overview is held by the upper management. Another approach is letting the translation be made by operational employees, but then a lot of regulations and communication is needed in order to form an overview of the coherence in the actions. This principle is also explained in Figure 19.

"The translation of strategy to practice is done with episodes, sub parts of the strategies. So actually little steps add up to accomplish the strategy. Lots of communication has to take place for this to be aligned" - ABN AMRO

Another practical insight on strategy realization was the fact that sometimes when the activities derived from strategy were executed, the connection with the strategy was lost. This occurred especially when the translation of strategy to specific action was not made by the employee who was executing the task. The more operational employees of ABN AMRO resonated with this strongly, but this also arose in the conversations with TU Delft and ING. In these cases the link of work activities with strategy realization was often not felt.

STRUCTURED STRATEGY REALIZATION

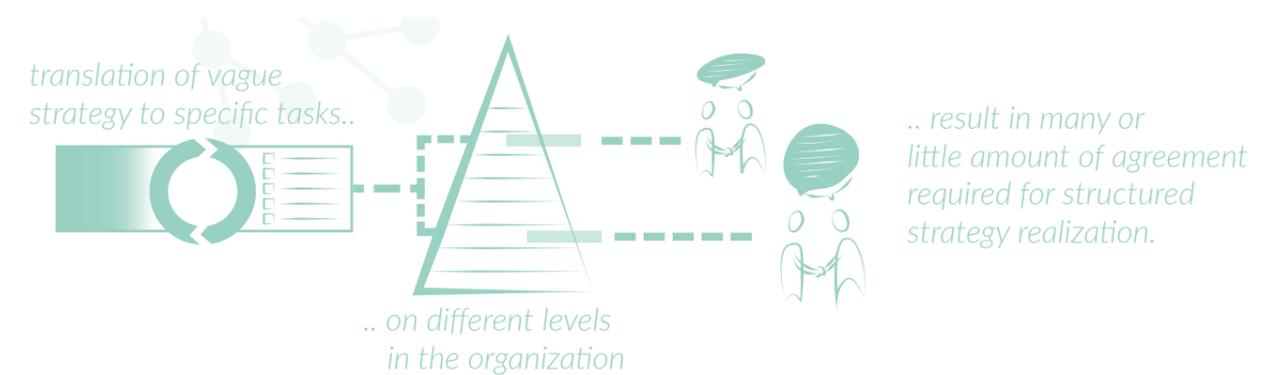


Figure 19: factors influencing structured strategy realization

"The strategy has become a good story to tell but not something we can use to measure our activities by. It remains a theoretical story for the stakeholders" - ABN AMRO

In summary, what was learned from practice was that the difficulty of creating coherence in the strategy realization process is dependent on the place in the organization where the translation to specific steps takes place. Besides this it was learned that the link between tasks and strategy is easily lost.

CHALLENGES

As can be read and seen in Figure 18, most challenges exist in the last step of the process; strategy realization. Since an organization can lean less on standardized methods as opposed to in the beginning of the strategic process, and the structure of organizations are unique and thus require unique approaches for realisation (more on this topic in the chapter The Employee in the Organizational Context), a tailored approach is needed for every organization. This could explain why more problems are located in this third step that are pressing to be solved. This correlates with literature which finds that 66% of the

organizational strategy that is not implemented is caused by a "strategy-to-performance gap" (Crittenden and Crittenden, 2008; Johnson, 2004). According to their research a big part of the problem is rooted in the "formulation-to-implementation" part which is similar to the process described with strategy realization. Thus, due to the sizable amount of challenges and the substantiation by literature, the focus of this thesis will be on the part of strategy realization. Ideas to help organizations with the other challenges were also formed during the thesis, which were placed in Appendix E.

CONCLUSION

This chapter gave insight into the strategic process in practice and delivered a detailed overview of steps that organizations walk through in such a process. Insights were shared on remarkable observations where organizations stray from the standard process and challenges observed in the different steps were defined. It was concluded that the most challenges occur in the second half of the process. This correlated with literature on the strategy process. Thus, the realization phase of the strategic process will be further looked into in the following section.

THE CHALLENGES OF STRATEGY REALIZATION AS SEEN IN PRACTICE

The previous sub-chapter explained how the different strategic steps are experienced in practice by the four researched organizations. It was seen that most of the challenges lay in the realization phase of the strategy. This is in agreement with literature which concludes that often many complications show in the realization phase of the strategic process (Baroto, Arvand, & Ahmad, 2014; Beer & Eisenstat, 2000; Crittenden & Crittenden, 2008). In this sub-chapter key results are presented from the obstacles in strategy realization that were observed in the four case organizations. These were derived from the 'analysis on the wall' (Sanders & Stappers, 2013) with statement cards of the interviews. They are substantiated by quotes from the interviews. An elaborate overview of all the insights gained from this analysis is given in Appendix D.

THE FIVE RECOGNIZED CHALLENGES

Six topics seem to be challenging when dealing with strategy realization: (1) the realization of strategy is difficult (a confirmation) (2) the translation of strategy with broad goals into specific actions, (3) the setting of priorities, (4) the correlation between actions asked of employees and the strategy, (5) the time-allocation of strategy realisation on top of regular workload, and (6) the task of triggering employees to contribute to the realisation. These topics will be elaborated on in the next pages.

1. Strategy realization is difficult

The results of the interviews seem to confirm the findings from research in literature, since these case organisations also report experiencing difficulties with strategy realization.

"How do you efficiently give it hands and feet that it really brings results?" - ABN AMRO

"It's also a matter of having the right management, that want to facilitate [the change], and see what they have to do. Do you have a few early adapters who can act as ambassador and can spread their enthusiasm?" - RH DHV

SIX CHALLENGES FOUND DURING STRATEGY REALIZATION IN FOUR ORGANIZATIONS

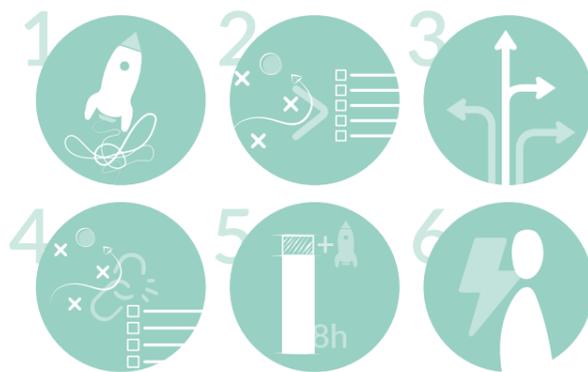


Figure 20: six challenges found during strategy realization in the four cases

2. Vague strategy has to get specific

All interviewees recognised the importance of the translation of vague strategy to specific action. Without this translation, it is difficult to realize these broad and vague topics.

"I attended presentations where there were a lot of one liners but little content. For example with things as: data is the new asset. If you communicate this way people are not going to understand and show resistance. You have to make it very specific" - RH DHV

From the research was found that the translation of strategy into specific action makes strategy accessible and tangible, gives assurance and lets employees know where they stand. When translating strategy into specific plans, the 'why' behind the strategy is still important to communicate. By planning specific actions one opens up the possibility to measure progress.

This translation is more difficult to make when the strategy is too broad, when the expected developments of the future market are not incorporated into the strategy, when the hired consultancy who suggested the strategy leaves before its implementation or when management who was limited in their involvement with the creation of the strategy has to do the implementation.

"If the strategy is too broad, then it is probably not going to activate very many people" - RH DHV

"Our managerial agreements consist of very specific things, because that vagueness that doesn't do anything" - TU Delft

In the researched organizations the translation of the vague strategy was completed differently in each case. The situations are described:

At TU Delft the translation was made by a small management group and documented officially by the signing of a realization contract.

"With the executive board we have made certain managerial agreements. In these we described what we want to do, and how we would like to accomplish that. Every board entity has done this. Subsequently, they have checked if the accumulated activities cover the entire strategy" - TU Delft

At ING the translation was made by the employees themselves (in agile teams) which gave them a feeling of purpose and belonging.

"What is especially important, from what I have seen, is formulating goals together where everyone is actively involved. If people recognise themselves in the goal and want to go for it, you are already halfway there... ..Having a purpose like this in combination with autonomy and mastery are key in the process" - ING

At ABN AMRO, strategy was supposed to be translated by the management but since the strategy was made by a separate group this was differently translated than expected. The strategy group eventually translated the strategy into eleven priorities.

"After the formation of the strategy the ball was in the court of the management. It was breeding there for a while, and I was not so pleased with the end result of the translation of the strategy" - ABN AMRO

"The strategy was made specific by translating it into eleven priorities, those are really incorporated in the work activities" - ABN AMRO

At RH DHV the translation is made gradually, which takes time. Bottom-up initiatives are welcomed from time to time. No clear structured approach is used. Employees do what they can.

"The nice thing about the digital transition is that we didn't have a specific vision back in 2015. Now you see we have that, and despite things are not always that efficient, of course you have to get movement in a big group of people. You see that a few people take a kind of pioneering role and try to emit that to make others enthusiastic. Then you see we are making progression." - RH DHV

Thus, the translation of strategy can be done in various ways. From the situations seen in the four cases, it looks like every organization approaches the translation of broad strategy into specific activities differently. The main approach of translation was similar at ABN AMRO and ING since they both used parts of certain agile approach but the specifics of their approaches were different.

3. The setting of priorities

In order to avoid the strategy being too broad, choices have to be made during its formation regarding which future developments to incorporate into the strategy and which to cast aside. When translating these future developments into strategic themes, a specific direction as outcome helps employees conceptualize the ideas and the implication of these ideas.

"Within a good strategy, I think, you make choices what you are going to do and what you are not going to do. It is about drawing a line." - TU Delft

"Basically, you want to apply focus with a trajectory like this. Sometimes I think, shouldn't you just set 5 priorities, that's it?" - ABN AMRO

"Where we can grow, is having less objectives." - ING

"Everyone tries to put his opinion in the strategy which can cause the strategy to get vague and woolly and have little meaning. If you know what you want to achieve but you let strategy form in a bottom-up process where everyone gets their say, while strategy actually requires choices, then you will get stuck" - TU Delft

"The core is the idea and the process, taking along the people who it touches. The development of a strategy is a source of power. On the other hand, you can't just take the average. Someone needs to say: "we are going to it like this"." - RH DHV

Apart from during the formation of the strategic themes, it is also important to make choices

regarding which activities form the realization of the strategy. With a forever changing environment, in and outside the organization, it is tempting to add priorities over time. This can result in a vast amount of points that need attention, which causes confusion in the process.

"For some managers it is difficult because they want to contribute very much to the higher goals. On the work floor I hear from people they don't know were they have to work on anymore [because of the high amount of priorities]" - ABN AMRO

4. Unclear relations between actions and proposed strategy

After the strategy is communicated with employees and a new future vision is presented as goal, employees expect change in their daily work life. Employees want to contribute to change and see change happening. If their daily job is not in line with the strategy and nothing changes, the strategic story feels as yet another empty story.

"People say: we have to get more digital right? And now we are asked to send letters. Why do we then have to make sure everything is safe and compliant. I want to digitalize these letters. That is experienced sometimes, as saying A and having to do B" - ING

"Does our work still fit the picture? If not, than the picture is wrong." - ABN AMRO

Most of the activities in organizations are not linked to strategy realization but are to keep the machine running. Employees that are doing these tasks cannot directly relate their work to the strategy, and can feel excluded. What can happen in these situations is that activities that do not match with the strategy are reversed engineered in order to match the strategy. In doing so the strategy is slightly adjusted or stretched to fit in these activities, resulting in the strategy losing focus and becoming more difficult to use as a guidance.

"There also are employees who do specific tasks, if these do not fit in the priorities [based on the strategy] than it gets added in 'other', which throws off the whole system." - ABN AMRO

Because the strategy is translated into specific actions multiple times, employees lose track of which actions are linked to which part of the strategy. For example, in one case an independent

career counselling team was formed in order to guide employees to be more efficient in their career path. Another, more operational interviewee knew of the change in this team but was not aware that this was part of the new strategy.

"It is difficult to make the link of work activities to the strategy" - ABN AMRO

"I think, on a general level of the TU strategy, as an employee you actually don't really experience it. It made a certain amount of translations by which the connection to actions is lost" - TU Delft

"I knew that a new career committee was set up but I was not aware that it was a consequence of the strategy. I don't think anyone has made this link." - TU Delft

5. The realization of strategy on top of workload

Since strategy usually describes novel goals for an organization, the realization of it steers it in directions an organization is not familiar with. However, along with the discovery of this new path, current work activities cannot be put on hold. This means strategy realization often consists of activities on top of the current workload of employees. This experience can make strategy feel like an extra burden that puts further pressure on the current workforce.

"It was not something that was ankered in their daily jobs, more something you sometimes walked by and thought: o, yes.. More an addition on your normal work activities" - ABN AMRO

6. How to trigger employees to realize strategy

As described in the previous section, employees can come to think negatively about the strategy realisation due to the extra workload or the lack of relevance to current tasks. Since strategy realization often requires change in the tasks and purpose of daily work, it is a difficult task to trigger employees to contribute to strategy realization. Several methods are suggested by the interviewees to stimulate the realization of strategy. The importance of seeing result of strategy realization is enormous. When employees are exposed to the results from the actions that are obviously linked to the strategy realization,

CHALLENGES IN FOUND IN THE LITERATURE

Regarding strategy realization in literature Beer and Eisenstat (2000) have summarized considerably advice regarding strategy implementation based on experience of many management strategists. According to Beer and Eisenstat (2000) silent killers of strategy implementation consist of: (1) top-down or laissez-fair senior management style, (2) unclear strategy and conflicting priorities, (3) an ineffective senior management team, (4) poor vertical communication, (5) poor coordination across functions, businesses, or borders, and (6) inadequate down-the-line leadership skills and development. Most of these silent killers relate to the challenges found in the four organizations, i.e. vague strategies and the importance of vertical communication. The factors from literature which were not directly experienced were most of the killers regarding management and leadership. The reason why these did not show up in the research could be because they are silent killers of strategy realization. They are often not explicitly experienced as a barrier for strategy realization. Thus, the literature indicates that the research for this thesis is only limited and more cases should be taken into consideration for forming a more complete picture of the challenges. However, since this is beyond the scope of this thesis, these additional challenges found in the literature are used to help categorize the challenges found in practice.

CATEGORIZATION OF THE CHALLENGES

The challenges discovered in the four organizations are categorized in order to decide which ones are taken into account in the remainder of this thesis. One challenge is that (2) the translation of the strategy into specific action is very dependent on the type of organization. This is a difficult topic to find a generic solution for which will fit multiple organizations. For this reason this challenge will not be addressed further in this thesis. The challenge of (3) setting priorities is in line with the challenge found in literature of unclear strategy. This challenge also touches upon the challenges of ineffective senior management teams and inadequate down-the-line leadership, since it is the senior management's task to provide priorities and down-the-line managers should communicate properly with senior managers on matching these priorities with operational tasks. The intertwining of these multiple layers makes it difficult to manage this problem and the expertise

it is easier for the employee to understand the motivations behind the implementation of the strategy. The possible benefits that can come from pursuing the strategy become more clear. *"When I saw a specific example of what we can do you suddenly see the possibilities. We can for example guide traffic in cities way more efficiently because we digitally monitor all the traffic. It is very inspiring to become aware of all the possibilities we have." - RH DHV*

Strategy realization can also be stimulated by actions of the management. Often many good ideas are present amongst operational employees. Finding these ideas and encouraging the development of those that correspond to the strategy can fuel the realization. An additional benefit of developing the ideas of employees is that they can feel supported and listened to.

"The value is always at the bottom of the organization, they know what is in the mind of the clients, they know what we are capable of. We have innovation processes, when people have ideas they can present them, that is a bit to passive if you ask me. I think there are a million ideas floating around that we should activity go and gather" - RH DHV

Other options suggested to stimulate the individual to realize strategy were: sketching a progressive image with the strategy, changing the physical environment, guiding the execution, matching senses of purpose, stimulating mastery, allowing a certain amount of autonomy and stimulating early adaptors which make other employees enthusiastic. All the ways in which management can stimulate the realization are displayed in Appendix D.

"In our case a very operational thing of the strategy is the redecoration of the hallway, that triggers different behaviour of people" - TU Delft

These six challenges found during the research of the four company cases give a more profound idea of the strategy realization process. To widen the scope beyond these four organizations, and to validate the discovered challenges, the literature on challenges in strategy realization was consulted, the findings of which are discussed in the following section.

of Strategiemakers is far off from coaching managers in their communication and output. For these two reasons this challenge will not be addressed further in this thesis. The challenge of (4) aligning the actions asked from employees with strategy realization is an important topic, since this is also stated in literature by Beer and Eisenhouwer (2000) as poor coordination across functions and businesses. Despite its importance this topic will be difficult to solve because this is a deeply embedded habit in organizations. It is not within the scope of this research to form a sophisticated enough overview of this problem to create a impactful solution which will function in different types of organizations.

The remaining two challenges are addressed further in this research because they are topics within the scope of this thesis and are less intertwined with the type of organization. They both are based on the employees' perspective on strategy as opposed to the perspective of the organization which places the solution within the employee. The challenge which describes (5) the realization of strategy adding to the workload could be bypassed when employees are intrinsically motivated enough to work on it. Eventually employees can influence what activities they will be working on; if the strategy realization has a personal interest, the realization would not feel like an addition on top of work. Also the challenge of (6) triggering employees to work with strategy realization is a situation where the employee has the power in their hands. Since employees have an influence on their daily tasks to a certain extent, they could, when properly informed and motivated, create a movement from the bottom up in strategy realization. When employees are triggered in the right way, their increased motivation for the strategy realization will automatically solve the fifth challenge. Thus, there only will be focussed on solving the sixth challenge. Triggering the employee by speaking to the interest and to motivate the employee will be further focussed on during this thesis and a solution for this problem will be designed.

CONCLUSION

When analysing the results from the research six main challenges were found within strategy realization: (2) challenge of translating broad strategy into specific action, (3) challenge of making choices, (4) the challenge of aligning actions (that are asked) of employees with the strategy so that they have a clear connection, (5) the challenge of strategy realization adding onto current work load and (6) the challenge of triggering employees for strategy realization. Since the triggering of employee is a problem that is less dependent on the organizational structure and thus similar between organizations, it is chosen to focus this challenge. As explained this simultaneously will bypass the fifth challenge. Improved triggering is done by approaching the problem of strategy realization from the perspective of the employee. The fact that the challenge is relatively unrelated to the organizational structure makes it possible for Strategiemakers to apply the solution to many of their clients. When looking at the problem from an employee perspective many other topics appear in their context. This context defines the requirements for the solution and prompts possibilities of movable layers which govern the solution. In the next chapter it is explained why it is chosen to address the challenge from the employee perspective further and what the context mainly consists of.

CONCLUSION STRATEGY

Strategy - Literature

The meaning of the word strategy is looked into and two types are defined: strategy as general problem solving tool and organizational strategy. The definition of generic strategy can be seen as a comprehensive and exhaustive analysis prior to decision making (Hart, 1992). The process is found to be described by a three step 'kernel' of strategy: diagnose - guiding policy - action plan. In an organizational setting strategy is used to guide organizations to compete in the marketplace, obtain competitive advantage, and gain market share (Hatch, 1997). It is explained what these steps in the 'kernel' of strategy step consist of in an organizational setting.

Strategy - Practice

The three step strategic process found in literature was explored in practice. As a result of the case based research on four organizations a more detailed overview was formed of the strategic steps. Insights on the challenges that were discovered during this research were shared. Since most challenges were located in the realization phase, this phase was elaborated on further. Six main challenges were found with strategy realization: (1) the realization of strategy is difficult (a confirmation) (2) the translation of strategy with broad goals into specific actions, (3) the setting of priorities, (4) the correlation between actions asked of employees and the strategy, (5) the time-allocation of strategy realisation on top of regular workload, and (6) the task of triggering employees to contribute to the realisation. Since the last two problems were less dependent on the organizational structure and thus similar between organizations, it was chosen to focus on how to trigger employees in the realization of strategy when finding a solution for the improvement of strategy realization. The solution should fit multiple kinds of organizations since Strategiemakers in this way can use the solution for multiple clients.

V. THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE EMPLOYEE

Insight attained through interviews and literature | Aspects of the employees' perspective

Strategy realization can be approached from two different perspectives: the organizational perspective and the employee perspective. In order for successful realization to happen both stakeholders should benefit from the pursuit. The remaining part of the thesis focuses on the realization of strategy from the employees' perspective. The aspects which build this perspective are: the organizational context of strategy realization, the employees' experience of the strategy and the basic principles for motivation. These aspects discussed in the next chapters.

The previous chapter concluded that the challenge of triggering employees to contribute in strategy realization is within the scope of this thesis. In order to trigger the employee successfully, their perspective on the realization process is important to investigate since the employee is crucial for the organization's strategy realization. Without convincing them, the strategy will be difficult to realize (Crittenden & Crittenden, 2008). Thus, there are two perspectives to strategy realization: the organization's and the employees' perspective. To make strategy a success, there must be benefits for both stakeholders. Now, there is often not much to win for the employee personally, see Figure 22. Thus, to trigger an employee to contribute in the strategy realization, the organization must enhance the benefits offered to the employee. Why would an employee want to contribute? What is in it for them?

have to communicate. Why does it benefit you when you take up this work?" - ABN AMRO

"How can I convince these people [employees]? Then you have to emerge yourself in their context." - TU Delft

"Strategy could bring an employee to the next level by matching to the wants of the employee." - RH DHV

"Having a purpose is an important aspect [for employees], as is having autonomy and mastery. These are three key aspects which motivate you." - ING

Beside these quotes nudging investigate at the challenge from the employees' perspective, also literature was found which indicated the importance of the employees' share in the realization of strategy. Linke & Zeffass (2011) show the importance of two-sided communication in realizing change in organizations which should be driven by interest from both sides. Where they urge to 'think from the employees' perspective'. Kress (2005) shows identical insights by prompting to improve the change process by 'showing the employees what's in it for them'. Lastly Keller and Aiken (2008) stress the importance of letting employees 'write their own story' for stimulating organizational change. These insights all point to the importance of the employees' perspective and share in organizational change which proves its importance.

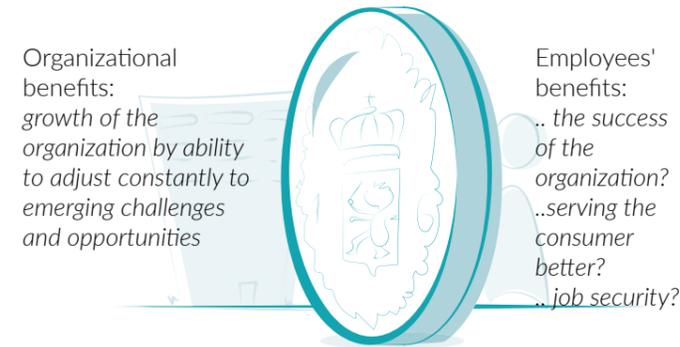


Figure 22: The organizational and employee perspective on strategy realization

INSIGHT ATTAINED THROUGH THE INTERVIEWS AND LITERATURE

A few interviewees indicated this employee perspective during the interviews. This nudged me to think about approaching the challenge of strategy realization from the employees' perspective. The following relevant statements were quoted during the interviews: "What's in it for me [the employee]? That is what you

ASPECTS OF THE EMPLOYEES PERSPECTIVE

To find out the motivation behind the behaviour of employees in an organization in the situation where one is confronted with the realization of strategy, an overview was formed of the context which influence the employees' behaviour, see Figure 21. The topics that influence the behaviour and motivation of the employee are three fold: organizational context they are in, the experience they have with the strategy and the basic principles of motivation. In the next few chapters these three topics are discussed.

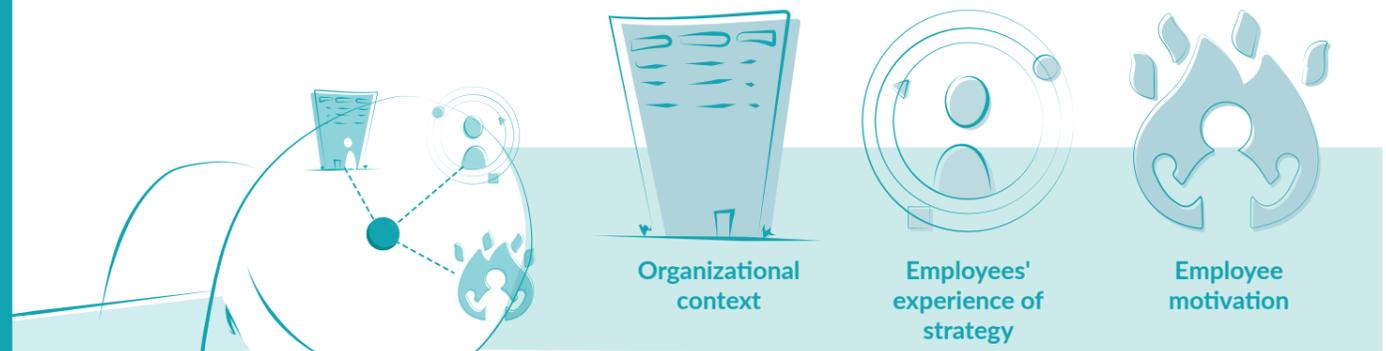


Figure 21: Aspects of the employees' perspective on strategy realization

APPROACHES TO STRATEGY REALIZATION IN THEORY

In the previous chapter the challenge of triggering the individual employee is elaborated on. One of the aspects which plays a role in understanding the perspective of the employee, is the organizational context the employee is in. This context is discussed in this chapter by investigating the influence of the organizational structure on the triggering of the individual for strategy realization. First, a literature review is presented on the influence of different approaches organizations can have in strategy realization and how this affects the triggering of employees. This is followed by an overview of the actors who influenced the realization process in the researched organizations.

fixation of strategy, revision of strategy, the role of the manager and the role of the employee. These factors vary between organizations and within these variations three models appear. An overview of these factors and the resulting models is presented in Figure 23.

In the elaborate research by Chaffee (1985) these three different approaches to the execution of strategy are implicitly found in literature: **the linear, the adaptive and the interpretive strategy model**. Differences in the approach are caused by four factors: fixation of the strategy, revision of the strategy, role of the leader and the role of the employee. In linear strategy, leaders of the organization plan how to achieve their organization's goals. In adaptive strategy, the organization and its parts change, pro-actively or reactively, in order to be aligned with consumer preferences and market developments. In interpretive strategy, organizational representatives convey meanings that are intended to motivate employees in ways that favour working for the organization. After this short introduction the influences are discussed per factor.

DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO STRATEGY REALIZATION CAUSED BY DIFFERENCES IN ORGANIZATIONAL APPROACH

The "kernel" of strategy was discovered as the general basis of the strategic process, however since all organizations are different, their execution of the realization process varies. Four factors are discovered which determine an organization's approach to the realization of strategy. These are:

THREE DIFFERENT MODELS TO STRATEGY REALIZATION

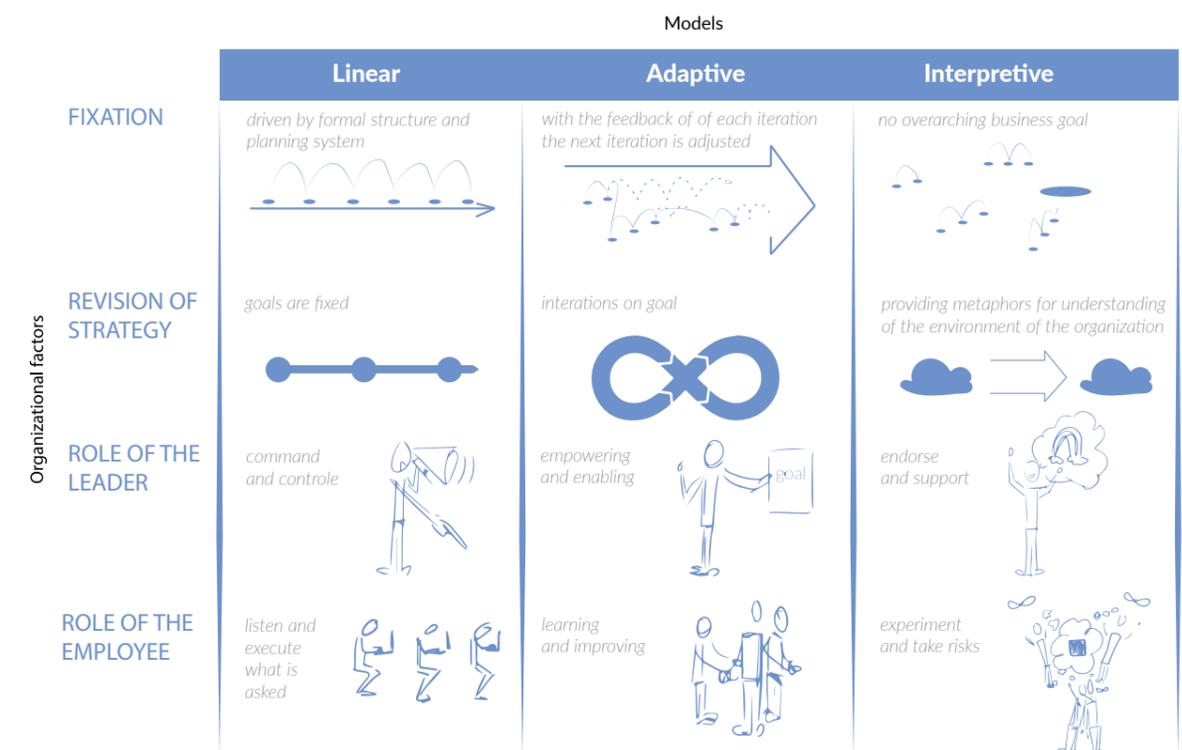


Figure 23: Different models to strategy

VI. THE EMPLOYEE IN THE ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

Approaches to strategy realization in theory | Organizational context in the case organizations

This chapter discusses the influence of the organizational context of employees on how they should be triggered for the realization of strategy. Firstly, three models are proposed which describe different approaches organization can have to the realization of strategy and their influence on the individual. Afterwards, the different actors who were pinpointed in the empirical research are presented; these are: the individual, the team, the manager and in one case the client. They all have an influence on how employees should be triggered for strategy realization in the case organizations. Lastly, three different ways individuals can contribute to strategy realization are identified. From this chapter it is concluded that different organizational contexts require different ways to correspondingly trigger the employee to contribute in strategy realization.

DIFFERENCES IN APPROACH TO FIXATION AND REVISION OF STRATEGY

The models vary in the way they approach the fixation of the goal posed by the strategy as well as the revision of that goal. Since these factors are overlapping both are discussed simultaneously. When dealing with strategy in a **linear** way, the goals are mostly fixed and the strategy is driven by a formal structure and planning systems (Hart, 1992). This is a traditional approach on strategy that consists of rigid steps which are executed without feedback loops. The goal, solution and requirements are clearly defined and few changes in scope change are needed. (Fernandez & Fernandez, 2008). The kernel of strategy as discussed priorly is walked through linearly.

The **adaptive** strategy consists of iterations on the strategy. With the feedback of each iteration the next iteration is adjusted, each delivering a partial realisation of strategy (Fernandez & Fernandez, 2008). The kernel of strategy is experienced as an infinite process where, sometimes, after a specific timespan, the strategy is revised and adjusted according to new insights. The goal of strategy is able to change when it seems no longer relevant to work towards it.

The fixation and revision of the strategy is non-existent in the **interpretive** strategy model. In the this model, strategy is driven by focussing on the organizational actors' initiative rather than an overarching business goal (Hart, 1992). The interpretive approach might be defined as a providing of orienting metaphors and frames of reference that allow the organization and its environment to be understood by employees. On this basis, employees are motivated to believe and to act in ways that are expected to produce favourable results for the organization (Chaffee, 1985). The interpretive strategist deals with the organization's environment through symbolic actions and communication which can be seen as a form of revision. The use of the kernel of strategy is left entirely to employees and their interest in such methods.

Fixation of the strategy and moments of revision are, as discussed, used very differently in the linear, adaptive and interpretive models. From linear use in the linear model to no use at all in the interpretive model.

DIFFERENCES IN LEADERSHIP

The models are of big influence on the way leadership is carried out in organizations. The different kinds of leadership are discussed per

model. Considering the linear model is based on strategic plans, which are planned and scheduled in detail, the tasks of the employees that should be fulfilled in order to realize the strategy are relatively fixed (Fernandez & Fernandez, 2008). This means that employees who are contributing to certain projects have freedom to choose in what manner they execute their work. This can be considered a "command-and-control" management approach which functions best in small organizations and in relatively simple environments (Seddon, 2003; Hart, 1992). The behaviour of the management is evaluating and controlling (Hart, 1992).

The role of the leaders in the adaptive model is more facilitating, since the goal and the means of realization of the strategy are revised in a set timespan together with the employees. Empowering and enabling employees is their focus (Hart, 1992). The adaptive project manager is trained to deliver a product instead of adherence to a process (Fernandez & Fernandez, 2008). This model provides maximum business value within the given time and cost constrains due to the fact of less time being wasted on non-value-added work. In order for this approach to work, meaningful customer involvement must be applicable, since their opinion is the driver behind choices in revisions.

The interpretive strategy model poses leaders as sponsor of the organization. According to this model leaders should endorse and support the employees in order to produce valuable results for the organization. Creating a compelling vision and a clear corporate mission gives meaning to the organizations activities and provides a sense of identity for employees (Hart,1992).

Thus, the different approaches on strategy realization have a big influence on how leaders behave. Leaders of linear strategy evaluate and control, leaders of adaptive strategy empower and enable, and lastly, leaders of interpretive strategy endorse and support.

DIFFERENCES IN THE ROLE OF EMPLOYEES

Besides having an influence on the role of management, the different models of strategy realization also influence the role employees have during this realization. The behaviour expected from the employees differs per strategy realization model. In the linear model the strategic process is pre-scheduled with clearly defined goal, solutions and a planning system in order to achieve the results (Fernandez & Fernandez, 2008; Hart, 1992). This means employees

INSIGHTS DERIVED FROM THIS APPROACH

In the last paragraphs the four factors determining the different approaches to strategy realization are explained. From these insights is derived that the way employees experience strategy is influenced by the behaviour expected by the organization, as summed up in Figure 24. The expected behaviour will effect the motivation of the employee in contribution to this strategy (Mintzberg, 1978 as cited in Hart, 1992) together with the personal preferences of the employee (Barrick, Mount, & Li, 2013; Edwards, 2008). There is also derived from these insights that when employees have more freedom as described in the models, the power of the employee over the actual realized strategy increases. In that situation the triggering of the employee to contribute to realization will be more important for successful realization. Lastly these is concluded that the differences in organizational context addressed by these models would probably all ask for a different approach on triggering the employee to take action on the strategy.

STRATEGY REALIZATION IN REALITY

As stated before the amount of freedom the employee has in choosing goals and methods influences the way they should be triggered for strategy realization. The influence of this

ROLES OF EMPLOYEES IN DIFFERENT STRATEGY REALIZATION MODELS

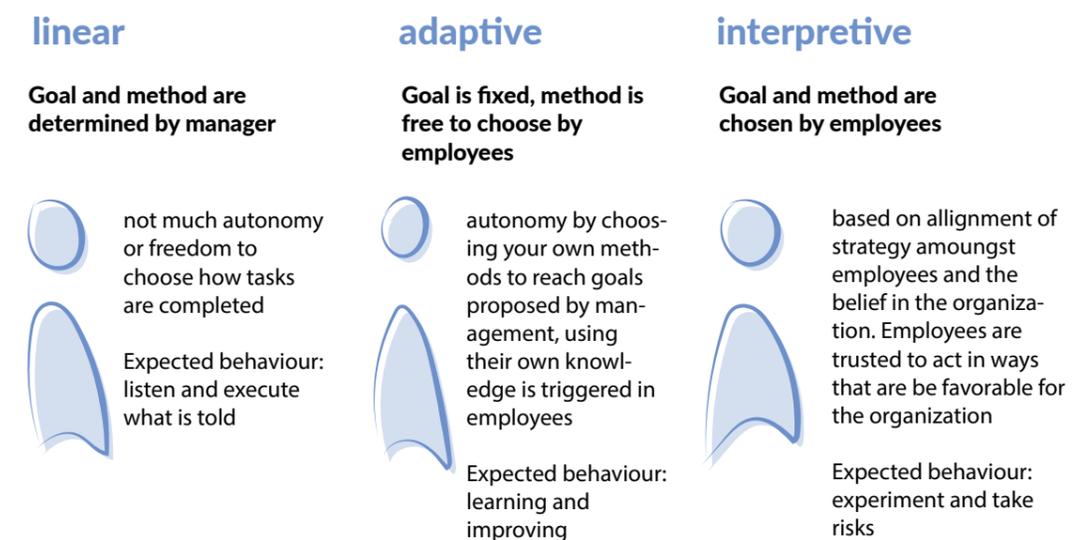


Figure 24: The behaviour expected from employees in the different models of strategy realization

on the actual outcome of strategy realization was investigated by reviewing the research of Mintzberg (1987) on process of the translating strategy into reality. He discovered that the actual realized strategy is often not equal to the intended strategy as is depicted in Figure 25. Often only a small part of the intended strategy is managed to be translated into action, and the realized strategy often exists more of emergent strategy than deliberate strategy. This emphasizes the fact that the interpretation of the strategy and the motivation to take action of the employee is of big influence on the actually realized strategy. Meaning that the quality of the strategy realization is related to the extent in which employees are convinced of the strategy and thus create action to pursue the realization. Hence, the higher the amount of freedom of the employees, the more important the triggering of the employee, and the bigger the influence of the employee on the actual realized strategy.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, as the four factors, which together form the different approaches to strategy realizations, were explained, it is clear that strategy realization can be approached in various manners by organizations. The ways which can be varied are linked to the different behaviour in the fixation of the strategy, the revision of the strategy, the behaviours of leaders and the expected behaviours of employees. The differences in expected behaviour of employees is of influence on the motivation of employees and on the way individuals should be triggered for strategy realization. In situations where the freedom of employees is high, the importance of triggering is also higher, and their power over the actual realized strategy is higher. The information presented in this chapter provides an understanding of the influence of the organizational context on the triggering of the employee as found in the literature. In the next sub-chapter the embedding of the employee in the organizational context as found in the empirical research is presented.

THE REALIZATION PROCESS IN REALITY

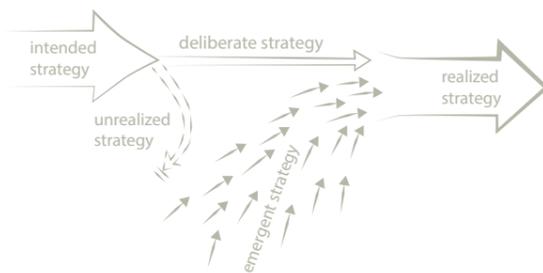


Figure 25: The process of strategy realization in reality

ACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE STRATEGY REALIZATION

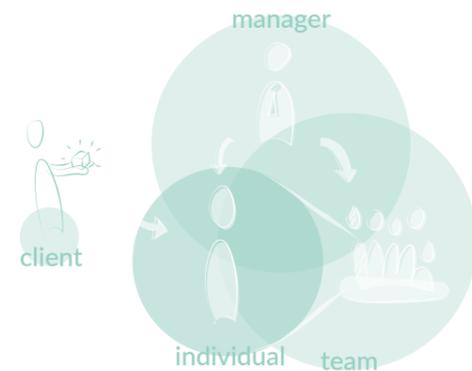


Figure 26: Actors which influence strategy realization

DIFFERENT PERSONA'S IN STRATEGY REALIZATION



Figure 27: Different persona's in strategy realization

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT IN THE CASE ORGANIZATIONS

As was seen in the literature, differences between organizational approaches to strategy realization have an influence on how individuals should be triggered. The following paragraphs are focussed on the organizational context as experienced in the case organizations. The relations of the employee within the organization in the realization process will be described to conceptualize how an individual employee is embedded in the organization, and how this influences strategy realization.

EMBEDDING OF THE INDIVIDUAL

In order to determine if the individual is enabled by its organizational surrounding to contribute to the realization of strategy, the structure of this surrounding is explored in the literature in the last chapter. During the cases study, important actors could be distinguished which influenced strategy realization, these were: the individual, the team and the manager. A small side actor that also had some influence was the client of the organization. They will be shortly introduced and the influence on the triggering of the employee will be explained.

Individual

As explain priorly the personality of the employee has an influence on the way they can be triggered for strategy realization. The three types of individuals that were distinguished in the case organizations are presented and how they should be triggered is explained in the following paragraphs. An overview of the persona's is presented in Figure 27

"You have to take into account the different type of people on your floor [when pursuing strategy realization]." - ABN AMRO

The Opportunist

The opportunist naturally sees the change in the environment of the organization and his/hers entrepreneurial spirit drives them to adjust their work to take into account these developments. It is beneficial when opportunists have a talent for selling their ideas to the management by keeping the plans small en accessible for them.

The opportunists should be used to the fullest by:

- Stimulating them to pursue ideas that are in line with strategy.
- Encouraging their enthusiasm to go over on other people
- Using their early results to let other employees imagine the possibilities the strategy brings.

"Use people who understand it [the strategy] as an ambassador, as early adapter. As manager of a department you must see you have a couple of early adapters, they can imagine the possible results of a strategy" - RH DHV

The Baker

From the empirical research was found employees who belong to this group would rather only just do their job. They rather not get involved in the pursuit of new strategies. An example was used of a baker who just wants to bake his bread and is happy doing just that. They can probably be motivated when there is a reason for them to take part in the strategical change. If there is no benefit for them, they will have a negative attitude towards the change the strategy will bring.

"Some people are not used to it or they find it difficult. In the past they were allowed to just build and now they have to think about what they have to build and why they have to build things. Sometimes this is addressed as negative." - ING

The Resistor

Resistors are employees who will resist to the change proposed by the strategy. These resistors can be employees who naturally resist all change, or their resistance could be generated because their values do not match with the (new) values formed by the (new) strategy. During the interviews, managers were advised not to pay a lot of attention to these employees, because they can not be triggered easily for realization of strategy, and not all employees have to agree with it. It has been stated several times that sometimes strategy realization creates an necessary outflow of employees.

"The clarifying of the strategy also initiates an outflow which can be very healthy" - RH DHV

Manager

During the interviews all organizations stated that the role of the manager is important during strategy realization. The interviewees proposed specific behaviour and specific actions with which employees could be triggered to contribute to for strategy realization. Managers could influence individuals by communicating a lot about strategy (cited by all organizations), doing this with emotional and rational arguments (cited by two organizations) and making the employee feel like they have influence (cited by two organizations). Tips that were provided on how to trigger the individual were: decreasing pressure, sketching a progressive image with strategy, creating a physical change of the environment, providing the employees with an additional challenge, guiding employees in execution, providing purpose, enabling mastery, and increasing autonomy. During the interviews many more statements were shared on ideal behaviour of managers to enhance strategy realization, a full list is presented in Appendix C.

"When you can make more space and time for new developments as a manager and if you combine this with a strategy which conveys where we want to stand in 2022, than it become more interesting for

How the individual employee can contribute to strategy realization

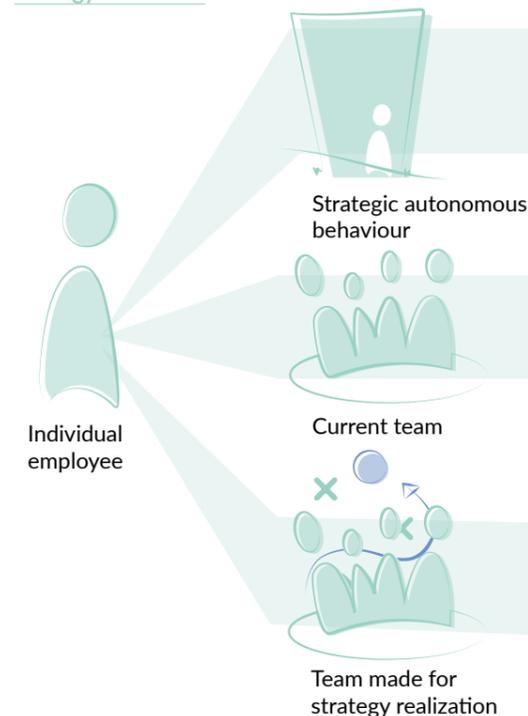


Figure 28: Ways for an individual employee to be part of strategy realization

a lot of people. The acceptance and convincing of employees to contribute becomes way easier." - RH DHV

Team

By nine out of eleven of the interviewees the importance of the team in strategy realization was mentioned. Autonomous teams were cited to increase fun and motivation of the employees opposed to realization by three organizations. Multidisciplinary teams were seen as effective during strategy realization by all organizations. Interdependencies between other teams and departments could decrease the amount of impact possible to make. Multiple tips were provided on how the management can facilitate this team autonomy by three different organizations, which increases the triggering of the employees: creating trust with the management, decreasing the control of the management, giving enough time and freedom, facilitating 'the why' and setting clear outlines.

"[A member of an autonomous team] usually we get the time to solve it, I like that a lot. At the IT-side sometimes we get some unforeseen tasks but usually the freedom is given; solve it how you want to solve it." - ING

Client

At one case organization the clients were used during the pursuit of a project related to the strategy. In order to prove the worth and demand for the product, a client was asked to co-invest. This was used to prove the relevance of the idea to the management. Hence, to help prove demand for a strategy realization related project, clients can be asked for validation and/or to convince the management.

"I was inspired to change the business and went to a client with a proposition. They said they were interested and wanted to contribute a little. Then I came back in the organization and said: guys, I already have a client who sees this as a good development. Then you see that the management tags along." - RH DHV

These four different actors all have influence on the realization of strategy according to the interviewees. In these prior paragraphs tips were given on how these different actors could trigger the individual employee in strategy realization. Next, will be described how employees are able to contribute to the realization when triggered.

WAYS EMPLOYEES CAN CONTRIBUTE

Beside the embedding of the employee, the research of the strategic processes in the four organizations also sketched an image of the ways an individual can contribute to the realization of strategy. Three options were identified: through individual activities, through their current team and through a specially formed team for strategy realization. An overview of these options is displayed in Figure 28. A few of the quotes which implied these manners of contribution are presented below.

"I was developing projects myself without strategy. I have to say, it helps when there is a strategy created which aligns with my work" - RH DHV

"We said they had to engage in the strategy more often with their [current] teams" - ABN AMRO

"For some part of the realization we make new teams. They consist of a mix of experience from inside, outside [the faculty] and new people." - TU Delft

WAYS EMPLOYEES CAN CONTRIBUTE ACCORDING TO THE LITERATURE

As not many citations were gathered on this topic, further research was conducted on possibilities

of individual contribution to strategy realization, since this is the most important channel when triggering individuals for strategy realization. Many literature research has noted the growing importance of intrapreneurs (employees who take hands-on responsibility for creating innovation of any kind) within a business, to innovation and corporate success (Burgelman, 1984; Kuratko, Montagnor, & Hornsby, 1990). Burgelman (1983) found an aspect of this intrapreneurship to consist partly of autonomous strategic behaviour. This behaviour calls for encouragement of initiative at operational level which contributes to strategy realization, and middle managers who try to convince top management to support these initiatives (Mirabeau & Maguire, 2014). Employees can exercise autonomy by suggesting improvements, conceiving new business opportunities, and engaging in internal development and/or external promotion of a product (Hart, 1992). Inducing this autonomous strategic behaviour is similar to the triggering of the individual employee. Encouragement and freedom at operational level seems crucial for enabling this autonomous behaviour, which affirms the importance of high freedom in choice of goals and methods, as seen in the three models to strategy realization. Thus, in order to trigger the employee, encouragement and operational freedom are necessary together with a supporting middle management.

CONCLUSION ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

The employee in the organizational context from the literature

Three different approaches to the execution of strategy are identified by Chaffee (1985): the linear, the adaptive and the interpretive model. Differences in the approaches are caused by four factors: fixation of the strategy, revision of the strategy, role of the leader and the role of the employee. The expected behaviour of employees varies per model; in the linear model employees are expected to listen and execute what is asked, in the adaptive model one is expected to learn and improve, in the interpretive model the employee is expected to experiment and take risks. Thus the amount of freedom of the employee varies per model. This influences the way a individual employee should be triggered for strategy realization.

The employee in the organizational context in the practice

In the researched organizations it has been discovered what actors had influence on the realization of strategy. These actors were: individuals, teams, managers and, in one case, the client. Amongst the individual employee, three types of persona's were identified: the opportunist, the baker and the resistor, all of which should be triggered differently for strategy realization. The team as an actor trigger the employee in realization of strategy when the team is autonomous. Managers can exert certain behaviour or perform certain actions to stimulate strategy realization. Tips are provided on direct actions which are experienced to trigger the realization of strategy. Following this was discussed how individuals were able to contribute to strategy. This could be through strategic autonomous behaviour, through their current team or through a special team for realization of strategy.

THE STRATEGIC PROCESS FROM EMPLOYEES' PERSPECTIVE

After discovering how triggering the employee is influenced by the organizational context, this chapter gives insight into how the employees experience the strategy. Firstly, an analysis of when the employees were involved in the strategy was carried out in the case organizations. An overview, is presented in Figure 29, of the involvement different layers within an organization who play a role in the strategic process: strategic team, managers and employees. It also shows the actors involved for every step in the strategic process for each organization. In Appendix C, an overview is presented including substantiation per step by facts obtained from the interviews.

In the presented overview, the first strategic step where a significant part of the employees were involved, in all organizations, is the in the process where knowledge is gathered on the market and its developments. In three of the case organizations, the reason for this was twofold; to obtain knowledge for the strategy and to let employees provide input in order to create support for the realization phase. As will be explained in this chapter, involving employees during this step was stated by the interviewees of three organizations to increase realization, because employees recognize their input and mediate their opinion by hearing the input of others.

Besides this, the overview shows that the majority of the employees are only involved starting at the step where the strategy is communicated throughout the organization. This is a relatively late point in the process. After this peak in involvement, an inclination occurs. During this strategic step, the management presumably starts setting up the guiding policy and loses contact about the progression of this with the employees.

Hence, the experience of the employee can be improved by decreasing the gap after the communication of the strategy. In order to discover how this part can be improved, the employees' experience of the strategy from the moment it is communicated was researched. This will be discussed in the next sub-chapter.

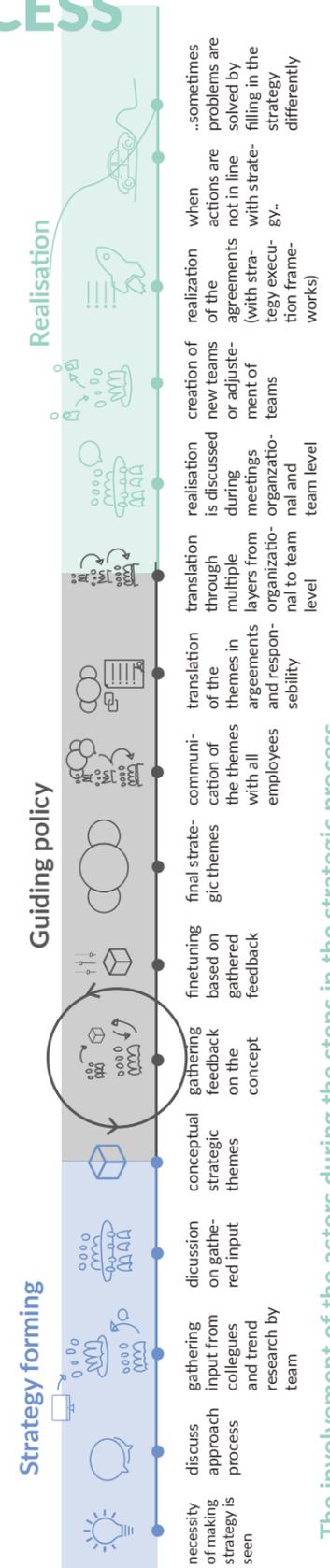
VII. THE EMPLOYEES' EXPERIENCE OF STRATEGY

The strategic process from the employees' perspective | The employees' experience of the strategic process | The change framework in the case organizations | Representation of the phases in the case organizations

In this chapter the employees' experience of the strategy will be discussed as a component of the employees' context during the realization process. In the literature a change framework was discovered which theoretically describes the phases through which employees' experience the strategy. This change framework was validated during the empirical study. Also, was tested to which extent employees of the case organizations went through the steps of the model by means of a questionnaire. The insights gained by these activities will be discussed in this chapter, accompanied by the implications they have on triggering the employee for the realization of strategy.

THE EMPLOYEES' EXPERIENCE OF THE STRATEGIC PROCESS

The steps in the strategic process



The involvement of the actors during the steps in the strategic process



Figure 29: (right) The employees' experience of the strategic process

THE EMPLOYEES' EXPERIENCE OF THE STRATEGIC PROCESS

DETAILED STEPS OF THE STRATEGIC PROCESS IN THE FOUR CASES

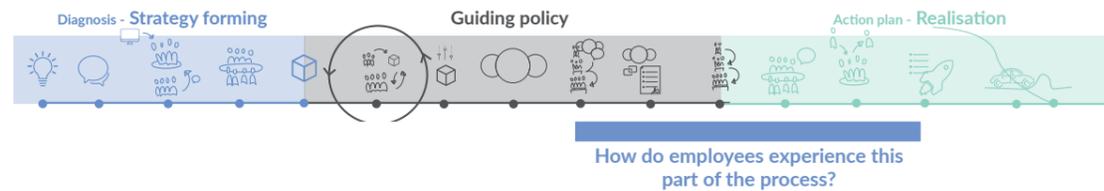


Figure 31: The part of the strategic process of which the employees' experience was researched

How employees perceive and relate to the strategy is of importance for the realization. What role the experience of the steps prior to strategy realization plays for the employee and its influence on how they take action will be explored in this chapter.

STRATEGY IS CHANGE

The first step of introducing a new strategy to the employees who were not involved in the creation of it, is the communication of the strategy, as can be seen in Figure 31. When communicating organizational strategy, often a change is asked of the employees in their operational work. Employees are asked to switch to new (or adjusted) operational tasks in order to realize the new strategy. This phenomenon is not new since change is a continuously present aspect of organizational life, both at an operational but also strategic level (Burnes, 2004). These levels are closely connected as managing change is rooted in an organizations ability to identify where it needs to be in the future. Therefore, organizational change cannot be separated from organizational strategy, or vice versa (Todnem By, 2005).

THE ROLE OF AUTONOMOUS STRATEGIC BEHAVIOUR

The chapter on the influence of the organizational context, was read about strategic autonomous behaviour as a way for individuals to contribute to the realization of strategy. According to Burgelman (1983), autonomous behaviour is key in the strategy realization process. Therefore, the manner individuals process the received strategic communication is important. The journey which is experienced by individuals from receiving strategic information to acting autonomously was

researched in the literature. Since organizational change is strongly related to organizational strategy, the steps experienced when changing in behaviour were used to describe strategic change. This framework distinguishes a few phases that should be completed in order switch from getting informed to taking action (Linke & Zerfass, 2011; Welch & Jackson, 2007).

THE PHASES OF THE CHANGE FRAMEWORK

The change framework consists of different phases: awareness, understanding, acceptance and action, as is seen in Figure 30. The interpretation of these phases during the strategic process will be discussed.

Before these phases can be commenced, a certain belonging must be felt by the employees for a basic sense of motivation (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Belonging is seen by Cornelissen (2008)

FRAMEWORK OF CHANGE



Source: (Linke & Zerfass, 2011; Welch & Jackson, 2007)

Figure 30: The change framework

as “a ‘we’ feeling ...allowing people to identify with their organizations.”

For belonging, it is important that..

- ..the intent of the leader is pure (Heath & Vasquez, 2004; Lippitt, 1997).
- ..there is trust between leader and employees which is crucial for creating commitment (Kang & Sung, 2017; Van Den Hooff & De Ridder, 2004; Welch & Jackson, 2007).
- ..there are shared beliefs and values through which individual needs pertaining to the strategy are met (Cheney, 1983). These can be communicated by an organizational mission, and/or organizational values or felt through the organizational culture, which, provided that it is a compelling and creative culture, can stimulate the development of innovative ideas and members willing to contribute time and effort (Linke & Zerfass, 2011).

In the first phase, the awareness phase, employees are informed on the external developments in the environment of the organization. Internal organizational communication must be designed to develop awareness of change in the macro, micro and internal environment of the organization, which show the need for the organization to change. By communicating two-way about the changing environment and strategy a good relationship with the employees is maintained (Welch & Jackson, 2007). For the communication to be symmetrical, explaining their activities in the external environment is not enough, this is addressed in the next step.

During the understanding phase, the opportunities and challenges posed by the external environment should be explained for a full understanding of the strategic choices. In this way employees have a clearer understanding of ongoing changes in the organization's environment (Welch & Jackson, 2007). Employees gain understanding of the relationship between the ongoing changes in the environment and the consequential requirement to review the strategic direction (Welch & Jackson, 2007). Full disclosure on the problems that are foreseen and how this is going to be handled is important for respectable two-way communication (Welch & Jackson, 2007)

The third phase in the change framework is the acceptance phase, where there should be identification with strategic direction. Employees should see how this affects them, and make the translation to their daily working life (Linke & Zerfass, 2011). Good communication on strategy can help, since it addressed the need of employees to make sense of how they fit into the organization (Grunig, 2013).

When these three phases are addressed correctly, employees advance into action more easily. This happens in the last phase; the action phase. The amount of action is enhanced when there is a feeling of safety and there is room for making mistakes (Keller & Aiken, 2008; Lippitt, 1997). Also critical for success are; vitality regarding its execution, seriousness in its implementation, as well as repeated references to the strategy (Linke & Zerfass, 2011). Providing the employee with a certain freedom of choice in their contribution to strategy realization is also crucial for motivating them to take action (Linke & Zerfass, 2011).

This model lays the foundation for the individual employee by informing and preparing them for the realization of strategy. Improving the journey through the steps in practice, should result in the removal of hurdles to contribute to the strategy realization. By experiencing the steps appropriately, employees will be aware of the reasons behind the strategy and what it means for the business to commence with change. And above all, what it means for the employee him/herself in their daily work-life and how he/she can contribute to the change.

CONCLUSION

Thus, to prepare employees for the strategy realization on an individual level, and trigger them for the realization of strategy, a few phases experienced to induce this behaviour appropriately. Before the phases can be addressed, a certain sense of belonging should be present for the employees. For this belonging to be in order, trust, and shared beliefs and values, should exist between the management and the employee. Also, the intent of the leader should be pure. When this relation is adequate the following phases can be experienced: awareness, understanding, acceptance and action. This path prepares individuals for effective and reasoned contribution to strategy realization.

THE CHANGE FRAMEWORK IN THE CASE ORGANIZATIONS

TESTING OF THE CHANGE FRAMEWORK

During the interviews held with employees of the case organizations, the change framework was tested. The employees were asked if they could relate to the model based on their experiences with the strategy, and how the steps in the framework were experienced in their situation. During the 'analysis on the wall' (Sanders & Stappers, 2013) additions on the model were found.

Only one interviewee could not relate to the model, which means the other ten interviewees found the model a theoretical representation of the phases which were walked through, in order to get from communication of the strategy to the transition into action.

The following quotes implicitly prove the presence of the stages in the framework:

"Recognition of the things a company stands for and a match with your own values. I think that is an important thing." - RH DHV

"I think strategy helps to place action that everybody sees and feels that needs to happen, [market developments] in a framework" - TU Delft

"The reason behind choices is explained during a weekly session. The 'why' is very important for people to deal with work" - ING

"This type of action was undertaken when we found out that the acceptance part was not going so well. The root of the problem lied in the fact that people didn't understand it properly yet. That has improved a lot now, the alignment on the dot on the horizon." - ABN AMRO

"There should be an open atmosphere in which people feel safe to say if they don't agree. This also helps with their involvement in the strategy because there are less boundaries to keep silent when you don't agree or don't understand it" - ABN AMRO

ADDITIONS FOUND TO THE CHANGE MODEL

During the interviews was cited that other factors could also influence the employees' course through the framework. The additional factors which caused employees to go over in action were: discussion about the strategic themes and their realization, recognition of given input, recognition of possibilities through results of early projects and recognition of trends and developments in an employees' personal work context. These factors are discussed below.

By being part of the discussion either at the forming stage of the strategy, or the discussion on how to translate these strategic objectives into specific action points during meetings, employees get indirectly informed on the strategy and the developments they are based on. Through the discussion, their understanding and awareness increased. Besides that, being part of discussions naturally softens opinions because arguments are heard from other perspectives which helps in the acceptance phase.

"I involve employees in certain parts of the realization, it is very important to show them, in this part you are involved to decide this, even if there doesn't change a comma. That perception is very important, people get the feeling there is thought about this, and they are able to give input. In that process their understanding improves as well as their acceptance." - TU Delft

The second factor which was discovered to support the acceptance phase, was the recognition by an employee of the input he/she gave during the discussions in the forming phase. This gave employees the feeling there was listened to them and it provides a form of repetition.

"When they have the feeling that their input is incorporated during a discussion trajectory.. And in this dialogue you hear the opinions of other people which makes you adjust your own opinion. The result is a strategy where people's opinions are acknowledged. When a part of your feeling is recognizable in the strategy you already feel a certain acceptance" - TU Delft

More forms of recognition are important stimulants for triggering action. Six of the interviewees stated that seeing results early in the process, is an important stimulant to commence with action. This helps employees to imagine what possibilities the strategy brings and therefore enhances the options an employees sees for realization.

"Recognition of the strategy in their work environment works inspiringly, but not only in their work context, also what they see and read in the newspaper, if it is in line with that, I think it works very inspiringly for people, and therefore people go over to action quicker. Especially when your organization can full-fill a front runner position in those kinds of developments." - RH DHV

"When I saw a specific example of what we are able to do, I suddenly saw all the possibilities we have which I found very inspiring to see" - RH DHV

These gathered insights were not substantiated heavily within the empirical research and therefore, further research would be appropriate before incorporating the changes in the framework. Still these result give a practical insight in how employees experience the strategy, and how they can be triggered to contribute to the realization of strategy.

Another form of recognition can take place during the first two steps of the framework. After employees were informed on the developments in the market, it benefits their cognition of the situation when they observed proof of these developments in their personal work context. This form of recognition can emphasize the need for change and stimulate the employees to take action.

ADDITIONS TO THE FRAMEWORK OF CHANGE

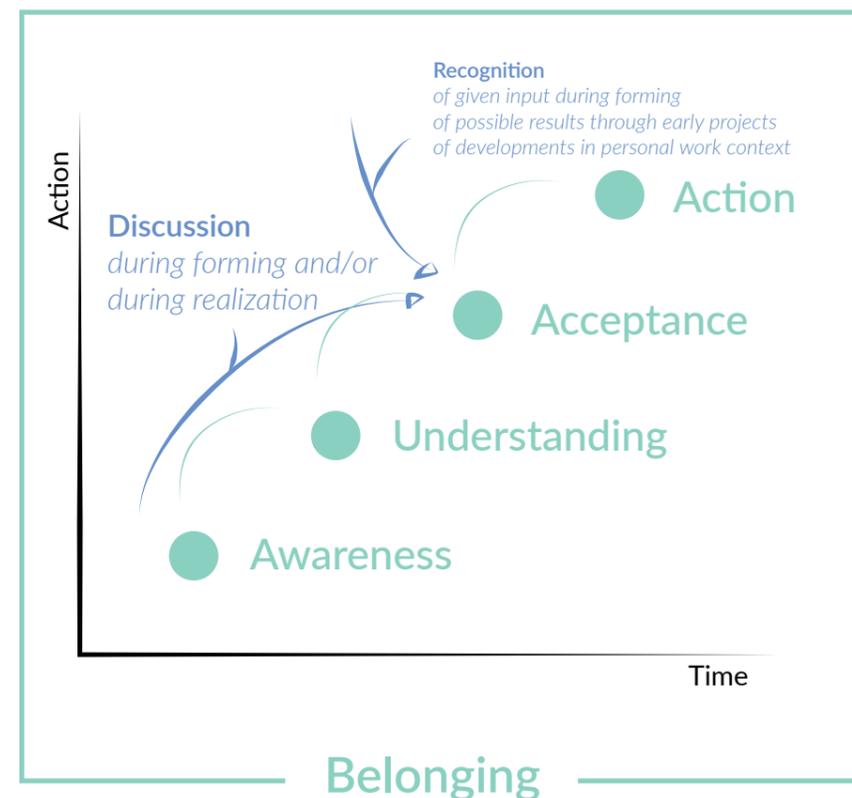


Figure 32: Additions on the change framework resulting from the empirical research

ANOTHER APPROACH TO THE PHASE PROCESS

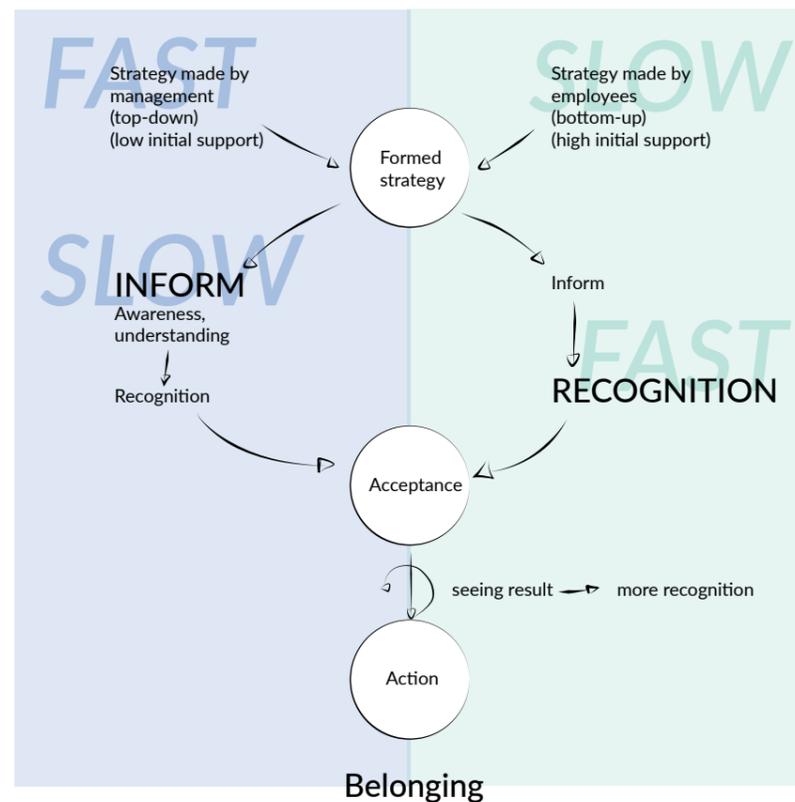
As a result of the 'analysis on the wall', another model was implicitly discovered in the insights from the interviews. When focusing on the role of recognition in the course of the change framework, an interesting insight was uncovered. In the literature was often found that involving employees during the formation of the strategy creates more support during the realization phase of the strategic process (Alexander, 1985; Dandira, 2011). Besides this, also in four interviews with Strategiemakers it was cited that they experienced that involving employees during strategy formation made the realization process easier. In Figure 29 is seen that all of the case organizations involved their employees in a way during the formation of the process. The result of this involvement on the realization was mentioned within three different case organizations. This phenomena was also found during the analysis of the interviews, from which a model was derived on the influence of recognition, presented in Figure 33. On the left side of the model is seen that when a few employees are involved during the creation

of the strategy, it results in a quicker forming phase but the informing phase is slower. On the right side of the model many employees are involved with the creation of the strategy, which makes this process lengthy. However, as a result, many employees recognize the strategy in the inform phase and already know what changes of the organization's environment it is based on. In this way the informing phase is quicker due to recognition. This model suggests involving employees during the formation of the strategy can help with triggering the employee later on in the realization process.

One of many quotes that substantiate this idea is: "An advantage of a bottom-up approach [on the strategic process] is the creation of support. Everyone gets listened to when you do it properly. This enormous collection of ideas of many people means on the other side you can be less actionable and that taking a decision takes longer" - TU Delft

For this model a similar situation applies as for the changes in the change framework, these results were not heavily substantiated. However, since this phenomena is also found in the literature, its basic assumption is confirmed.

TRANSLATION OF STRATEGY IN AN ORGANIZATION



54 | Figure 33: A model on the insights of the influence of recognition in the change model

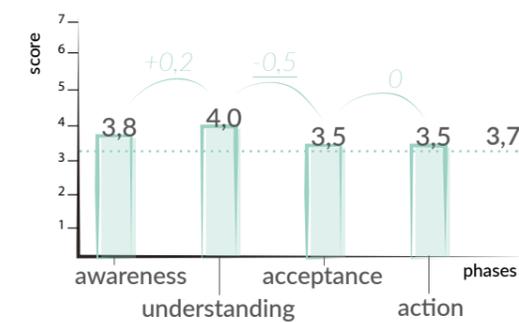
REPRESENTATION OF THE PHASES IN THE RESEARCHED CASE ORGANIZATIONS

A questionnaire was filled in by a few employees in the case organizations, which quantitatively measured how the different phases were represented in these organizations. The used

questionnaire and the generated raw data are presented in Appendix D. The conclusions are presented in this chapter.

CASE ABN AMRO

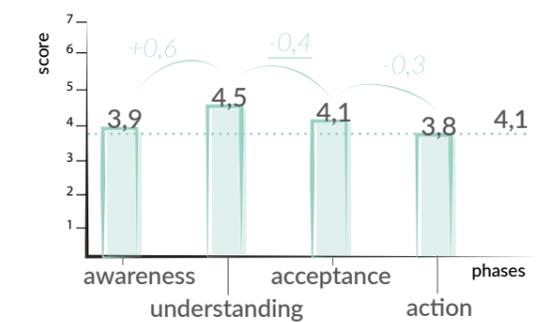
Number of participants: 3



Case context: Participants were asked about the strategy of the department. Usually taking action was within their possibilities.

CASE RH DHV

Number of participants: 8



Case context: These were all Business Unit managers questioned about the organizational strategy, which made high involvement by them in the strategy necessary.

CASE TU DELFT

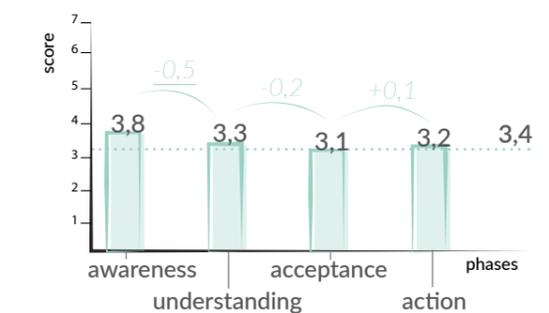
Number of participants: 3



Case context: Participants were members of the faculty of IDE. For these participants the overall strategy of the TU Delft is very abstract and distant from their daily work which could explain why the scores are the lowest.

CASE ING

Number of participants: 8



Case context: Participants worked in the mortgage department and were questioned on the organizational strategy. Their agile way of working made them often actively involved in the strategy.

Figure 34: The results of the questionnaire presented per case organization

In the graphs presented in Figure 34 the results of the questionnaires are shown. Since the situation per organization was very divergent, the summation of the results would be inappropriate. Besides this, a little amount of respondents filled in the questionnaire. Hence, the results were processes as qualitative results.

In three organizations the understanding phase was experienced more explicitly than the awareness phase, which is notable. It could be the case that the reason behind choices for this strategy were explained but the developments in the market which they were based on, were not mentioned. If this is true, mentioning the market developments which the strategy was based on, could be a way to improve the communication.

The general involvement with the strategy, the average score per organization, is the highest for the Business Unit leaders which is to be expected since their knowledge of the strategy and involvement with the realization is inevitable in such a high position. The second highest general involvement score was scored by ABN AMRO employees. They were questioned on their departmental strategy of which the realization laid close within their power. This could be the reason for their high involvement. The countering effect could be concluded from the TU Delft case. The employees were questioned on their organizational strategy which

was very distant from their daily tasks, hence their low score. The employees of ING were also operational employees and were questioned on their organizational strategy. These scores are still quite high which could explain that their agile approach increases their involvement with the strategy. These insights show that the factors which cause case variations possibly have a significant influence on the results and therefore it could be concluded that many factors influence the involvement of the employees.

Over all cases the change of the amount of involvement from understanding to acceptance is negative. For three of the four cases this is the transition where the most involvement is lost. This implies that by improving the acceptance phase the largest contribution can be made in the employees' involvement and thus in triggering of them to contribute to strategy related action.

CONCLUSION: EMPLOYEES' EXPERIENCE OF STRATEGY

The employees' experience of strategy in literature

In the literature it was found that in order to prepare employees for strategy realization on an individual level, a few phases should be experienced to facilitate this behaviour appropriately. Before the phases can be experienced, a certain sense of belonging should be felt by the employees. Between the leader and employees trust and shared beliefs and values are key. Also, the intent of the leader should be pure. When these factors are in place, the following phases can be addressed: awareness, understanding, acceptance and action. By going through these phases employees are prepared for effective and reasoned contribution to strategy realization.

The employees' experience of strategy in practice

The theoretical change framework was tested in the case organizations during the interviews to test its presence in practice. Besides the implicit confirmation of the change framework, a few additions on the change framework were found, which help the employee commence with the realization of the strategy sooner. These factors were: discussion about the strategic themes and their realization, recognition of given input, recognition of possibilities through results of early projects and recognition of trends and developments in an employees personal work context. Since the gained insights were based on a small sample size, further research should be conducted before these additions can be added to the model.

Aside from the validation of the model, some employees in the organizations filled in a questionnaire which quantitatively measured how the different phases were represented in these organizations. The results showed that the transition to the acceptance phase is often the most difficult. Thus, to increase the triggering of the individual, the focus of the design was to improve the facilitation of this part of the process.

HUMAN MOTIVATORS

In order to motivate employees to participate in strategy realization, it is crucial to know how employees are motivated in general. For this purpose, literature was examined which made it possible to incorporate general motivators in the solution for improving strategy realization.

In the well-known book of Daniel Pink (2011), he presents three elements which are crucial to tap into the intrinsic motivation of humans: autonomy, mastery and purpose. In situations where employees are compensated fairly, these three elements drive, engage and stimulate employees to deliver their best work. In a world where knowledge work, creativity and problem solving are required to stand out and exceed these elements create a more productive, efficient and happier workforce (Choi, 2019). The elements will be discussed separately.

AUTONOMY

Humans are all built with an inner drive and our self-direction is present from our birth. Look for example how children play and explore all on their own. According to a research conducted by Richard Ryan (as cited by Pink, 2011) a sense of autonomy is crucial in the motivation of employees. His research shows that successful managers at a bank offered 'autonomy-support' which consists of helping employees make progress by giving meaningful feedback, choice on their process and encouragement. This resulted in a higher job satisfaction and better job performance. Thus, giving people real control over their work stimulates the intrinsic motivation of employees (Dickinson, 1995; Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2010).

MASTERY

A sense of progress in our capabilities and in our work contributes to our inner drive. This is the reason humans want to get better at things and it is frustrating when no progress is seen. It is crucial for an employee to receive tasks which are neither too easy nor too difficult. Giving tasks which are somewhat above one's current capabilities, together with providing space and support fosters improvement and growth (Deci & Ryan, 2004).

PURPOSE

This element influences the intrinsic motivation of humans the most. By connecting to a cause larger than themselves, humans feel more capable of pursuing the most difficult problems. When people feel connected with the outcome through an underlying meaning, it helps humans to go the extra mile and stay engaged (Duckworth & Duckworth, 2016). By getting out of measurement by numbers and figures and connecting work to people and values this underlying meaning can be provided.

MOTIVATORS IN RELATION TO TRIGGERING THE EMPLOYEE

In relation to the improvement of triggering the employee, purpose and mastery are the most suitable elements of human motivators to incorporate. Autonomy is difficult to apply in a solution with the current context since it varies per organization, and the behaviour of managers is difficult to change (Keller & Aiken, 2008). Mastery is suitable to incorporate in the solution because it is less dependent on the kind of organization which makes the solution applicable in many organizations. Purpose is also appropriate to incorporate since strategy provides an organisational purpose. Still organizational wide strategy often does not accommodate an individual employees' purpose but a personal purpose could be deducted from it, which matches the organizational strategy.

CONCLUSION HUMAN MOTIVATORS

The three elements crucial in motivating employees according to Pink (2011) are: autonomy, mastery and purpose. The last two are suitable to incorporate in a solution since they are less dependent on the kind of organization and in the employees' own power to create.

VIII. HUMAN MOTIVATORS

Autonomy | Mastery | Purpose | Motivators in relation to triggering the employee

In this chapter three factors which influence human motivation are discussed, these factors are: autonomy, mastery and purpose. The factors mastery and purpose were determined to be suitable to incorporate in the design since they are less organization dependent.

IX. DESIGN

Design brief | Design development process | Design | Implementation | Validation

In this chapter the design goal will be presented, together with the development of the design and the design itself. The designed solution, which is designed to improve the motivation of the employee to contribute to the realization of strategy, is the 'Strategy through Inclusive Realization' Canvas Kit. This canvas kit facilitates organizations in linking the personal development of employees to the strategic objective in order to motivate the employees to contribute in strategy realization. After the design is presented, an implementation plan is used to describe the recommended further development, which is followed by an overview of the results of several validations performed with the design.

5w1h's	supporting visual	answer
who?		every employee (contributes to the realisation of strategy)
what?		enabling organizations to facilitate the translation of a strategy on a personal level by employees
where?		in the motivational dimensions of employees: purpose and mastery
when?		in the beginning of the realization phase of the strategy trajectory
why?		to improve motivation for strategy realization on an individual level.
how?		by guiding organizations in creating a win-win situation between the employees and the organization.

Figure 35: 5W1H of the design challenge

DESIGN BRIEF

CONNECTING ALL THE DOTS OF THE CHALLENGES AND INTERDEPENDENCIES

The realization of the strategy was experienced to be the most challenging part of the strategic process. From the six challenges derived from the study, solving how to trigger the employee in participating in the strategy realization was considered in the scope of this thesis. In Figure 36 an overview is presented of all factors that influence the triggering of the employee, which were gathered in the chapters. These insights were used as guidance during the design phase, and as requirement the design should fit in the context sketched by it.

DESIGN CHALLENGE

The design goal is to create a solution which facilitates the organization in discovering a win-win situation between strategy realization and factors that tap into the motivation of the individual employee. The solution should uncover for employees what specific action they want to take to contribute to the realization of strategy. Besides this, it should guide organizations with finding a match between the strategic objectives and the desired contribution of the employees. In Figure 35 the 5W1H method is used to form a detailed description of the desired outlines of the solution.

IDENTIFIED FACTORS WHICH SHOULD BE INCORPORATED IN THE DESIGN

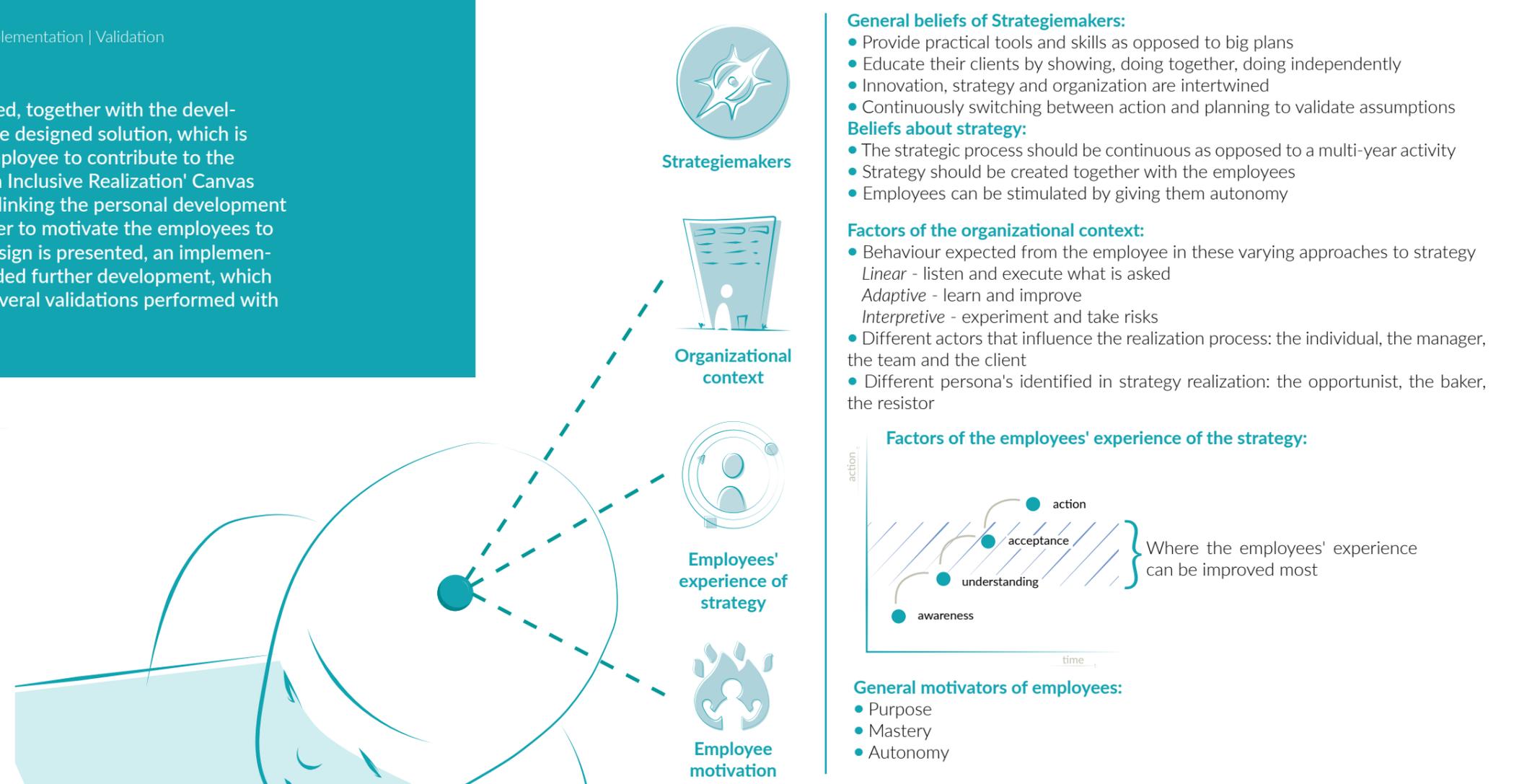


Figure 36: Identified factors which should be incorporated in the design

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

FROM DESIGN BRIEF TO DESIGN

In order to work towards a solution, the decision was made to start with ideation, which helps in generating a wide variety of solutions. This divergent phase consisted of two ideation (idea generation) workshops, and were combined with an individual ideation session through-out the research. This process is depicted in Figure 37. The session plans and results of all phases are located in Appendix F. The first session, organized with students, was designed to create a wide variety of ideas on solutions to the design challenge, and cluster them into different solution spaces. A solution space was chosen which was most fitting with the design challenge and the context as defined in the previous chapter. This solution space was: linking personal development of the employees to the strategic objectives in order to create a win-win situation for both. The second session was held with colleagues from Strategiemakers and was designed to create a variation of ideas on the defined solution space. After this, a design session was held with two colleagues of Strategiemakers who are experts on meaningful leadership to determine important soft skill factors which should be incorporated in the concept. The concept has undergone three iterations before it reached its current state which will be discussed next.

ITERATIONS OF THE DESIGN

After the ideation and design sessions many iterations on the canvas kit were made before it reached its current state. Most changes were made in the phrasing of the questioning, the flow of the canvases and the design of the canvases. Feedback was given on concepts during many sessions with the company Strategiemakers, and many meetings with my company mentor made it possible to harvest his numerous years of experience in the field. His critical questions helped significantly in the improvement of the canvas kit. Together with one of the owners of Strategiemakers, the strategy of the company was used as test case which gave insights on the improvement of the canvas kit (and on the improvement of realization process of the company). An overview of the evolution of three of the canvases is shown in Figure 38.

THE DESIGN APPROACH

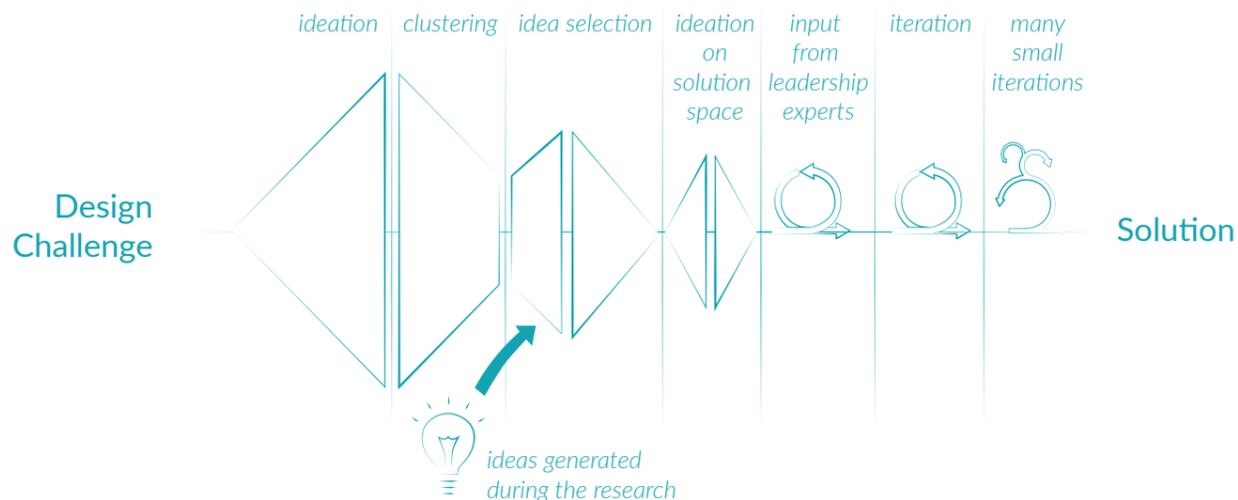
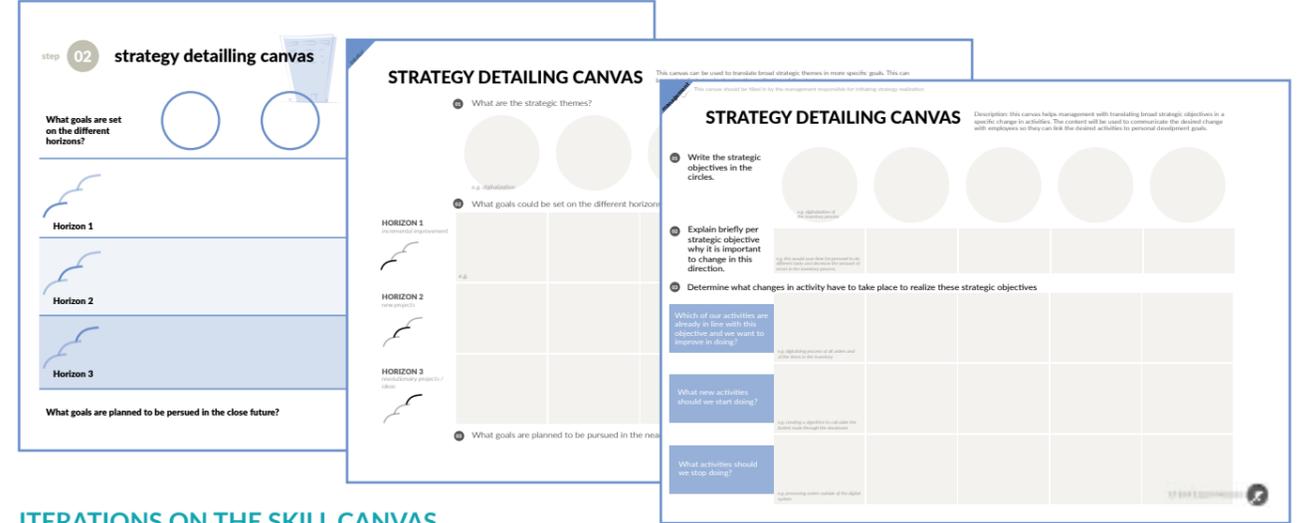
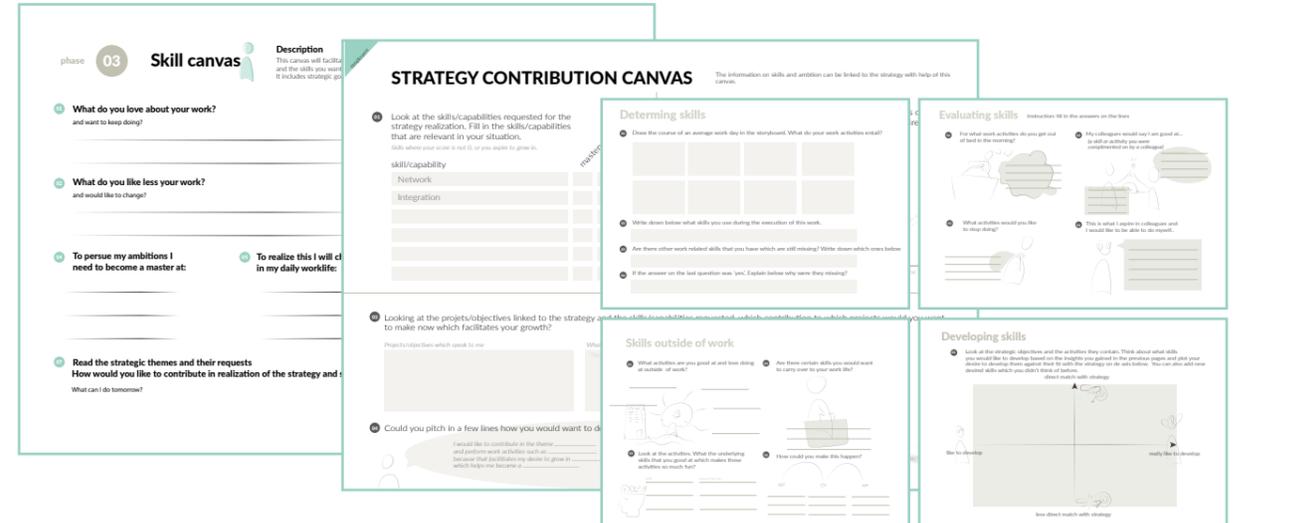


Figure 37: The design approach

ITERATIONS ON THE STRATEGY DETAILING CANVAS



ITERATIONS ON THE SKILL CANVAS



ITERATIONS EMPLOYEE MAPPING CANVAS

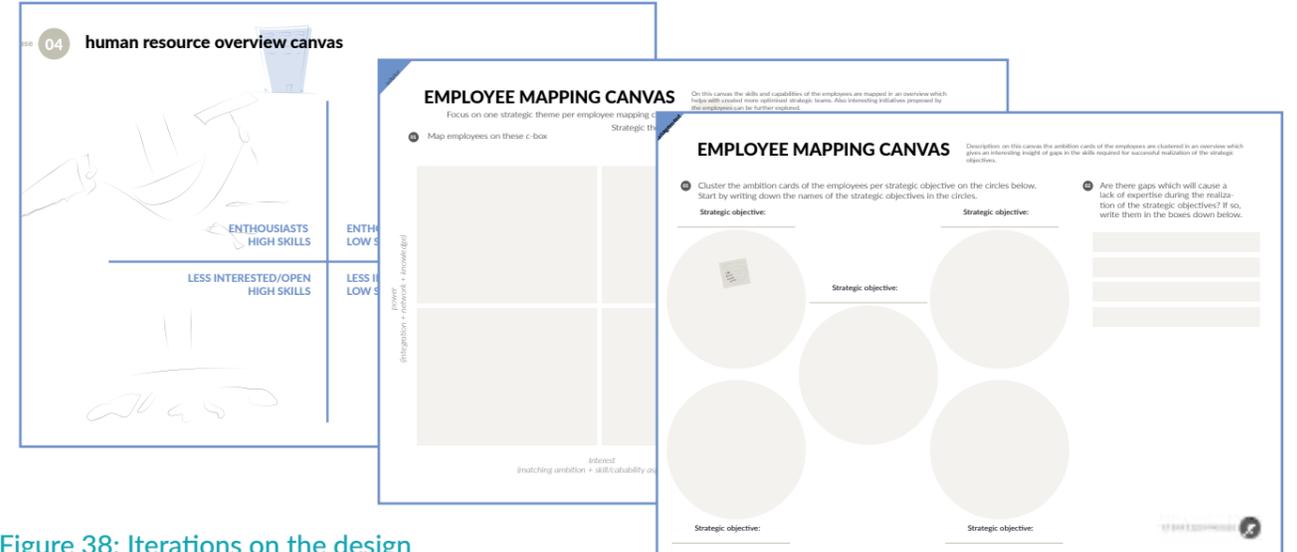


Figure 38: Iterations on the design

DESIGN: THE 'SIR' CANVAS KIT

INTRODUCTION

As posed in the research, the realization of strategy is often difficult for organizations. The main question to be answered was: how to improve strategy realization by motivating employees to take action? The result of the literature research and research of the strategy realization in practice posed that strategy realization would possibly be improved if the employee also can obtain some benefits from working on the realization of the strategic goals. A win-win situation between the goals of the employee and the strategic goals of the organization is most desirable. In this way one taps into the intrinsic motivation of the employee and links this with the strategy realization. In this chapter the 'Strategy through

Inclusive Realization' Canvas Kit is presented which facilitates discovering this win-win situation. The design guides organizations in the process of matching specific strategic objectives to the intrinsic motivation of employees. By making strategy realization an opportunity for employees to develop skills they desire to develop, strategy realization could become a matter employees want to get more involved in. In this way the *Strategy through Inclusive Realization* Canvas Kit addresses strategy realization from the organizational perspective and simultaneously from the employees' perspective, aiming to make a lasting match happen as pictured in Figure 39.

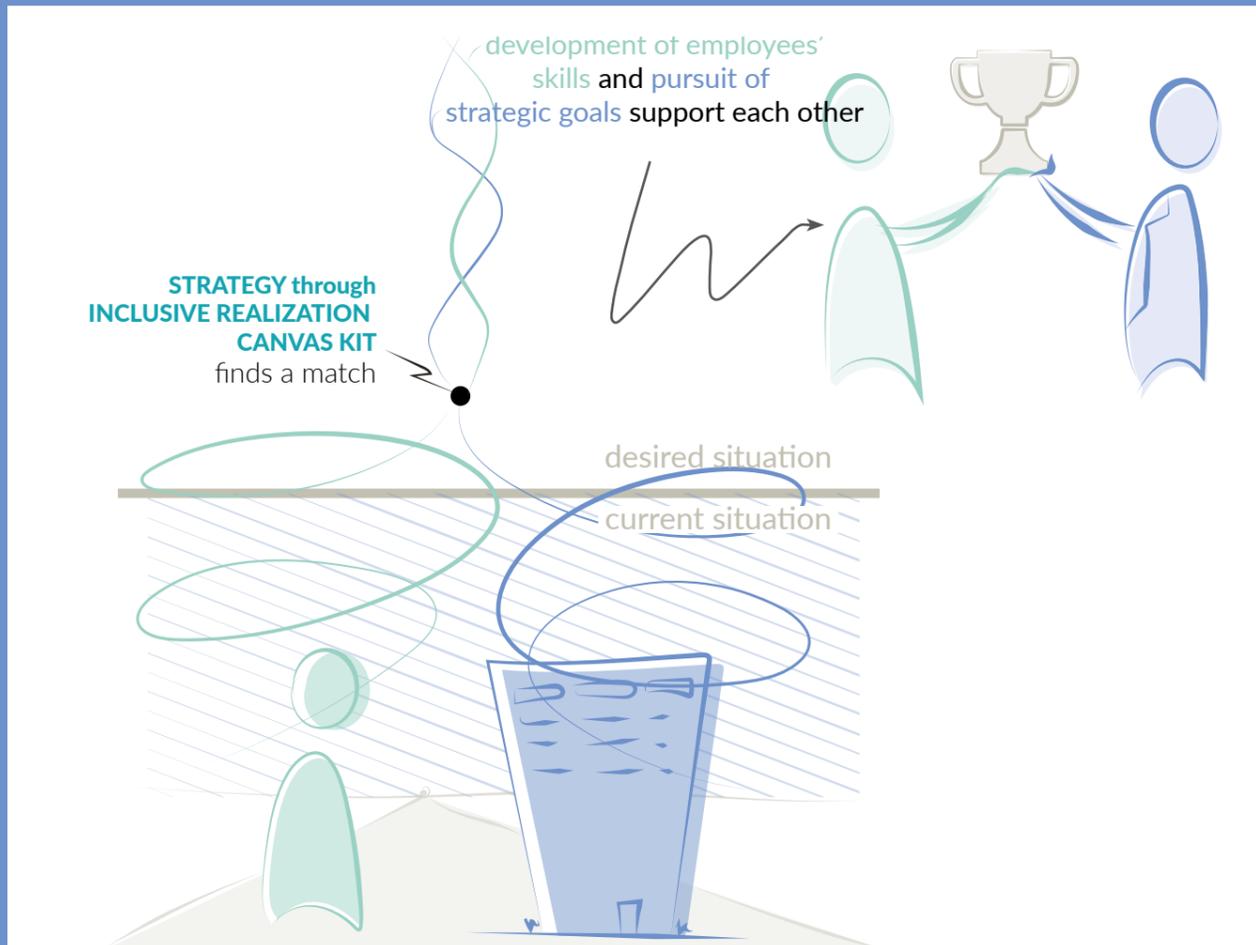


Figure 39: The effect of the designed concept

PRODUCT VISION STATEMENT

For	Large organizations that have formed strategic objectives and consist of many employees who were not part of the creation of the strategy
Who	Need guidance in motivating employees to take action in the realization phase
The	Strategy through Inclusive Realization Canvas Kit facilitates a process
That	Guides organizations in matching the personal development of their employees with the strategic objectives
Unlike	Existing solutions on solving the difficulties in the strategic process
This	Creates a natural motivation for employees to realize strategy by tapping into their intrinsic drivers; purpose and mastery

Figure 40: The product vision statement

WHAT IS THE 'SIR' CANVAS KIT?

The 'Strategy through Inclusive Realization' Canvas Kit (SIR canvas kit) is a bundle of canvasses which facilitates the organization in including their employees in the process of strategy realization. The canvas kit guides this by specifying what activities are necessary for the realization, and finding matching employees who can (and want to) contribute to these activities. The goal of the canvasses is to trigger the organization, during the designing of the strategic realization process, to think about the way they want to involve employees in the realization. The product vision statement, displayed in Figure 40, provides a vision of the product.

A booklet is designed for employees which facilitates them in pinpointing their current skills and discovering their desired personal development. Assuming most employees are not explicitly aware of this inner desire, this booklet helps them uncover what skills they want to develop, and what their ambition is. In the booklet the employee links their desired development to the strategic objectives of the organization. The discovered matches are discussed with the line-manager and possibilities for the employee to contribute are examined.

With this overview of the skills (and desired skills) of the employees, organizations have a clear view of their possibilities when planning for the realization of strategic objectives. They can place skilled employees where they can contribute most optimally. Also, they can place employees who want to develop a certain skill in an appropriate place where it benefits strategy realization. In addition, the process uncovers if there are employees in the

organization which have certain skills required for the realization the organization was not aware of, which increases optimal use of human resources. Lastly, through this overview, gaps in expertise are pinpointed prior to the realization which makes it possible to prevent this from delaying the realization of the strategy.

By using the SIR canvas kit, the organization is triggered to think about how to include their employees in the realization of strategy. Besides this, employees are given the opportunity to take part in the realization and use the activities connected to strategy realization to develop desired skills. By approaching strategy realization from both the organizational and the employees' perspective, a win-win situation is more likely to arise. It could potentially improve strategy realization since employees involved with the realization are intrinsically motivated through their personal development desires.

Besides changing the motivation with which employees contribute to the realization, the concept could also potentially improve the relation between the organization and the employee. By actively proposing to help the employees in developing their skills, a gesture is made by the organization that they care about their employees. This could be perceived by the employees as positive, since it could greatly benefit the employee. Moreover, the relation with employees who's jobs could disappear because of the strategy could prevail, because they could be more naturally guided into a new job within the organization.

HOW DOES THE CANVAS KIT WORK?

As found in the research, employees who are not included in the creation of strategy experience a few phases before taking action on the strategy, see Figure 41. At the end of the understanding phase the concept begins with adding value. During this phase the reason why is chosen for this strategy should be explained. In addition, it is recommended to already invite the employees to think about how they want to contribute to this strategy already during the understanding phase. This is an opportunity to inspire employees to think about their role in the strategy.

After the understanding phase, the acceptance phase arises where the Canvas Kit adds the most value. Since this phase model is often experienced

more iteratively in reality, the acceptance phase could also be recognised as the moment in which the employees internalizes what the change is going to mean for them personally. The 'SIR' canvas kit offers employees an opportunity to discover what the strategy will mean in for their future work situation.

A summary of the trajectory which facilitates the translation of the strategic objectives into specific opportunities for the personal development of the employee, can be seen in Figure 43. The process is explained step by step in the following paragraphs. The designed canvases are presented on full page in Appendix G.

FRAMEWORK OF CHANGE

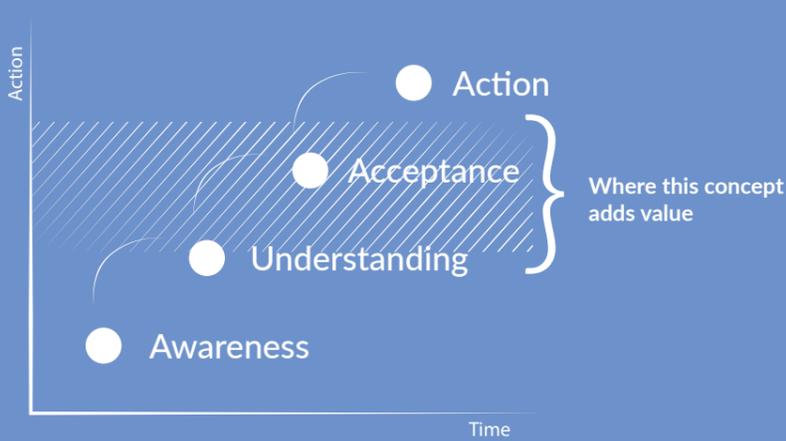


Figure 41: The phase in which the concept adds value

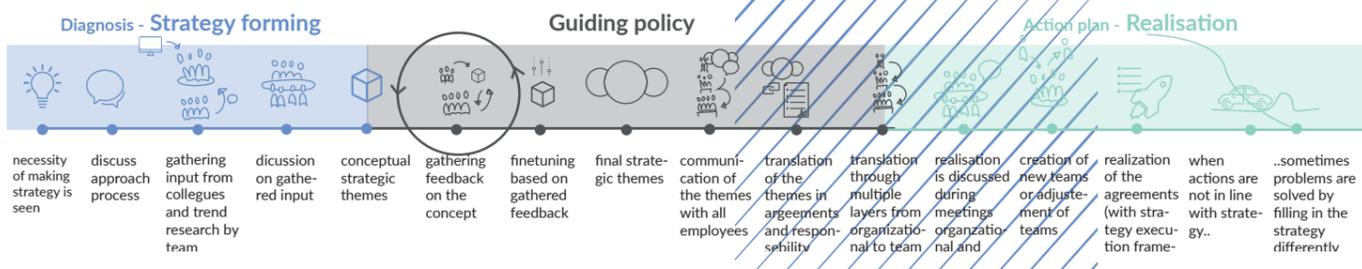


Figure 42: The part of the strategic process where the concept is applied

TRAJECTORY TIME-LINE

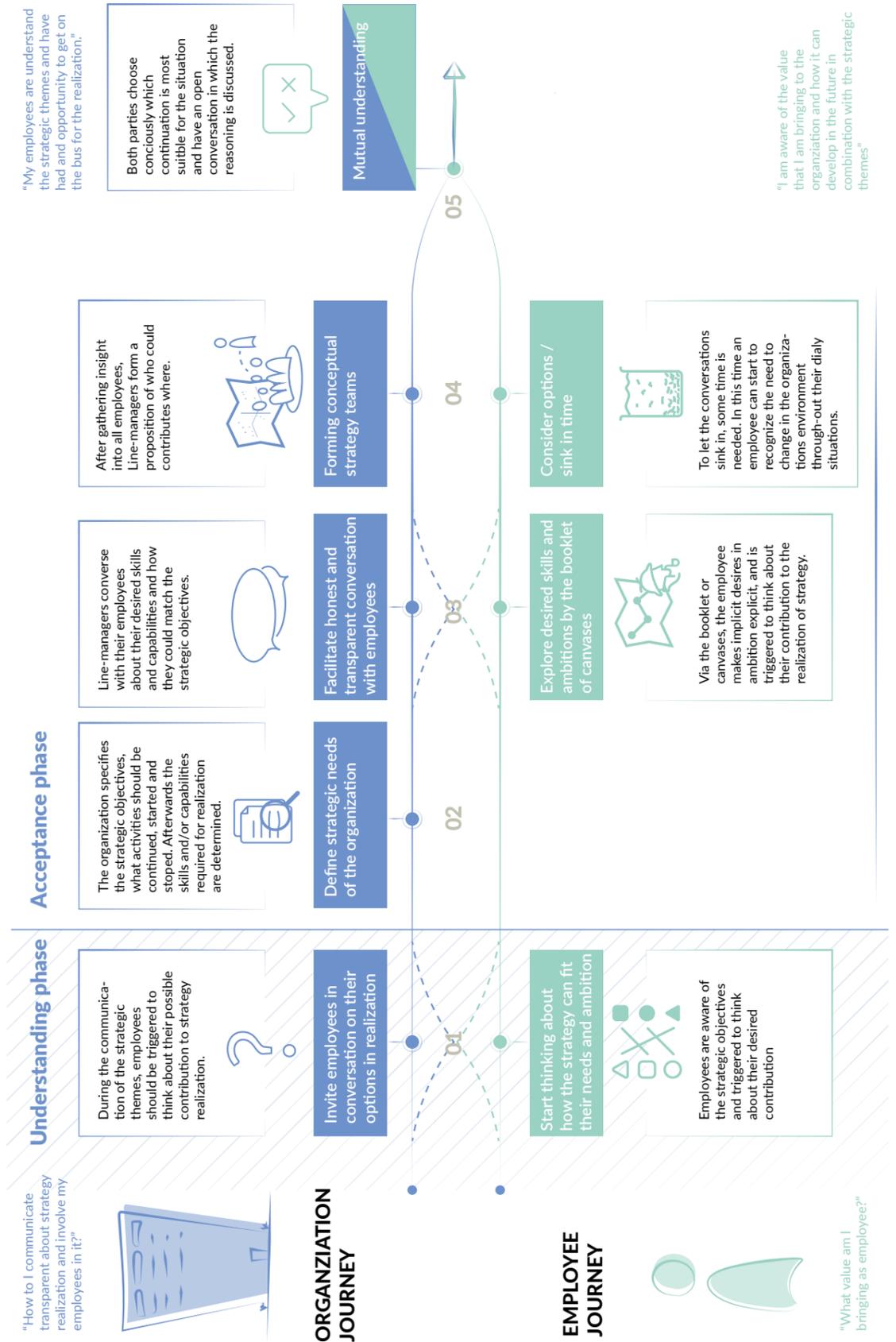


Figure 43: The trajectory timeline of the 'SIR' canvas kit

THE STEPS IN 'SIR' CANVAS KIT PROCESS

01

Step 1 - As described earlier, the first step of the trajectory time-line takes place in the understanding phase, see Figure 41. Here, the seed is planted by the organization to trigger employees to think about their possibilities in the contribution of strategy realization. During the communication of the formed strategy the employee should be asked to start thinking about how they can and would want to contribute to the realization of the strategy. The organization should do this in a way that fits the organization and the strategy.

02

Step 2 - During this step the organization is facilitated in the translation of the strategic objectives to a specific requirement in employee skills. In the first canvas, see the next page Canvas 02, the specification of the strategic objectives is aided by deciding what activities the organization should continue doing, start doing and stop doing. To place the strategic objectives into context the organization is asked to fill in the reason behind the objective and who will be responsible for its realization.

The second canvas (as seen on the next page, Canvas 03) facilitates the translation of the defined change in activities into required skills needed for the realization. The canvas triggers the management to think about what skills and/or capabilities are needed for the realization of these strategic activities. By determining the skills which are needed, a clear overview is formed of the human resources needed to succeed in the strategic objective. This canvas can be chosen to be completed for a long-term strategic plan, as most organizations have. However, this could cause problems when filling in the required skills, since different stages of the realization often require different skill-sets. Therefore, the option exists to use the canvas to determine the required skills only for the next quarter. This will be easier to determine and besides this it matches with the belief of Strategiemakers that strategy should be revised every quarter. As guidance, a tip is given to users to invite knowledgeable employees to join the session when it is unclear for the management which skills are needed for certain activities.

When these two canvases are used the organization should have a clearer idea of the kind of skills and/or capabilities required for the realization of the strategy. With this specific requirement, it is now possible for the organization to communicate with the employees what kind of skills and/or capabilities are requested for the realization. Before communicating these two canvases to the employees, the clearness of the information should be reviewed, preferably by someone who was not involved in the creation of the content.

03

Step 3 - In this step the employees' perspective is introduced. Here, the specified strategic activities and their required skills are linked to the personal development of the employee. The initiative to find the match should lie with the employee since it is an opportunity for them to advance in their skills. To guide the employees in finding this match, first the information on the required skills and/or capabilities should be provided by the organization. Secondly, the employee discovers their desired skills and ambition. To guide this process, a booklet was designed (as seen on page 74). Assuming this is latent knowledge for most employees, this booklet helps to make them explicit by using generative questioning (Sanders & Stappers, 2013). This is a technique which uses fun questions and creative assignments to discover knowledge which people are not explicitly aware of, see Figure 44. Since a booklet is often a hurdle for organizations to print, the questions are also designed in canvas format (displayed on page 73, canvas 05, 06 and 07).

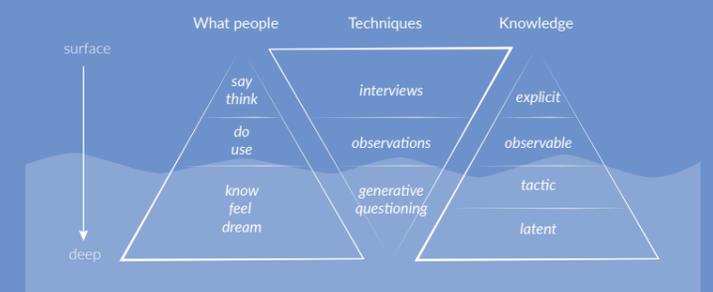
The booklet also guides employees in finding a match between their desired skill development and the skills required for strategy realization. By completing two 'contribution cards' with their desired contribution, the information on their desires can be communicated with the line-managers in a structured manner. After the booklets are completed by the employees, the line-managers should take the lead in gathering their employees wishes on their contribution to the realization of the strategy by means of handing over the 'contribution cards', accompanied by a conversation. During these conversations both employee and manager are advised to be honest and transparent about the discussed topics. This honest and two-way communication improves the relationship between the organization and the employee (Kress, 2005; Lippitt, 1997). A canvas was designed for the line-managers to gather the employees' desires and make it possible to communicate with the management responsible for the arrangement of the strategy realization policies and teams.

04

Step 4 - After gathering information on the desired skills of the employees, the team accountable for the design of the strategy realization is facilitated in finding matches between the required skills and/or capabilities in the strategy realization and the gathered desires of the employees. On the canvas, which is presented on page 72 canvas 03, the strategic objective is filled in, and the matching activities are written down together with the matching required skills. In this framework the 'contribution cards' with the desired contribution of the employees are placed at the corresponding activities. This creates an overview of the available skills per strategic activity and the gaps in skill and capabilities. After matching the employees with the activities the other resources are defined which are needed for the realization of the activities which prepares the team for successful realization. When new strategy teams need to be formed the Team Forming Canvas can be used, presented on page 72, canvas 04.

05

Step 5 - The last step in the process prior to launching the strategy realization, is a good closure of the trajectory. It is recommended for the line-managers to try and come to an agreement on a suitable outcome for both parties. When the employee is not chosen to be part of the strategy realization while this was their desire, it would be recommended to try and find alternatives for these employees to still develop their desired skills or contribute to the strategy in other ways. This appropriate mutual closure of the trajectory could increase the relationship between the organization and the employee because it stimulates two-way communication.



Source: Sanders & Stappers, 2013

Figure 44: The theory behind generative questioning

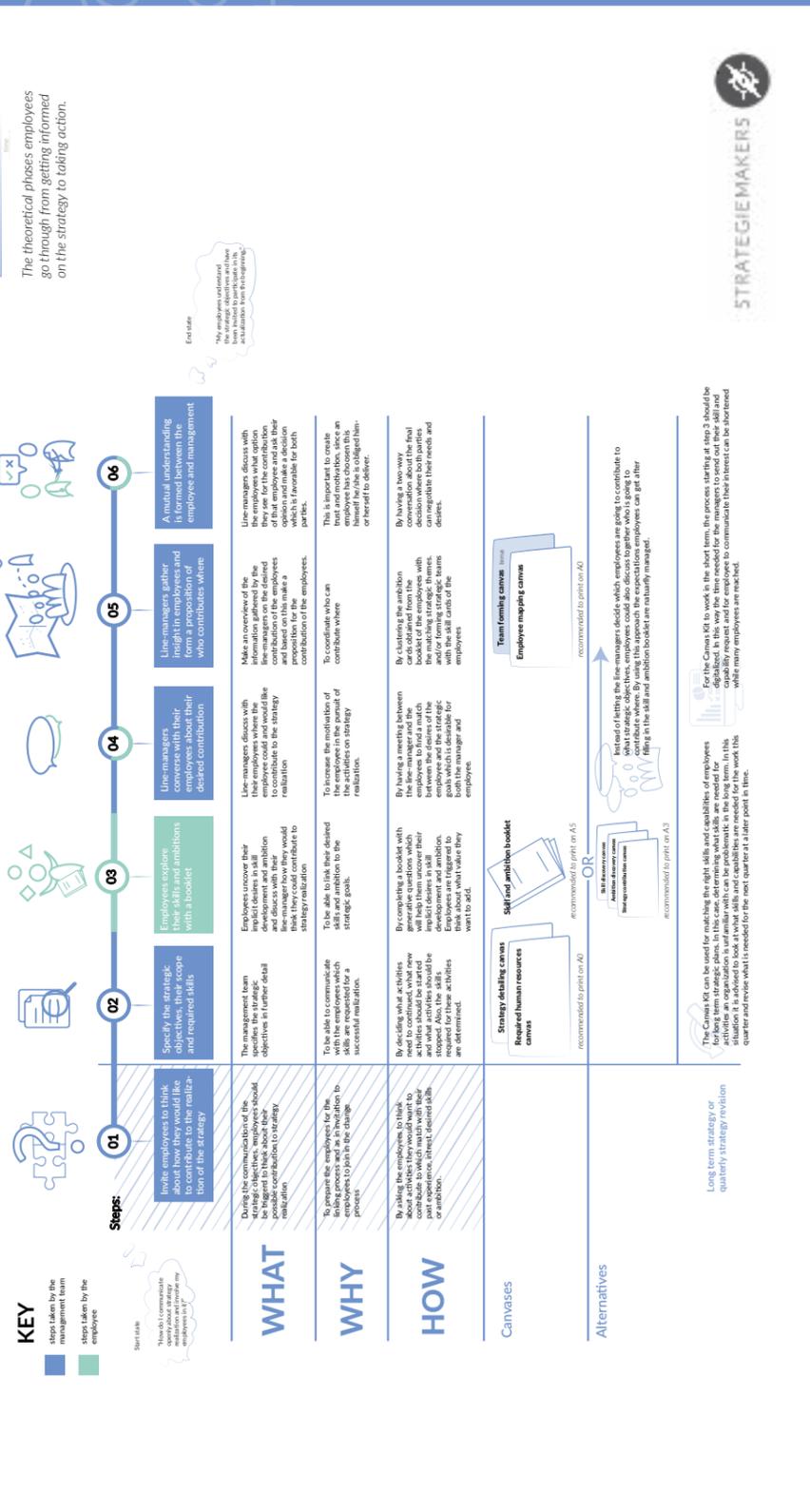
'SIR' CANVAS KIT

'Strategy through Inclusive Realization' Canvas Kit

CANVAS KIT COVER

The 'Strategy through Inclusive Realization' Canvas kit

With this canvas kit the management team responsible for strategy realization can motivate employees for this process by linking their personal development to the strategic objectives. By linking the desired skills and ambitions of employees to the realization of strategic goals, employees will be intrinsically motivated to take part in realization because employees are driven by a personal purpose and the opportunity of increasing their skills. This canvas kit guides the management team through the steps that need to be taken to make this link. In the overview below the steps are shown and the idea behind them explained. In the figure on the right a framework is presented which describes the phases an employee goes through from getting informed on the strategy to taking action. This concept is designed to improve the acceptance phase.



CANVAS 02

FOR THE MANAGEMENT

STRATEGY DETAILING CANVAS

Description: this canvas helps management with translating broad strategic objectives in a specific change in activities. The content will be used to communicate the desired change with employees in order for them to link the desired activities to their personal development goals.

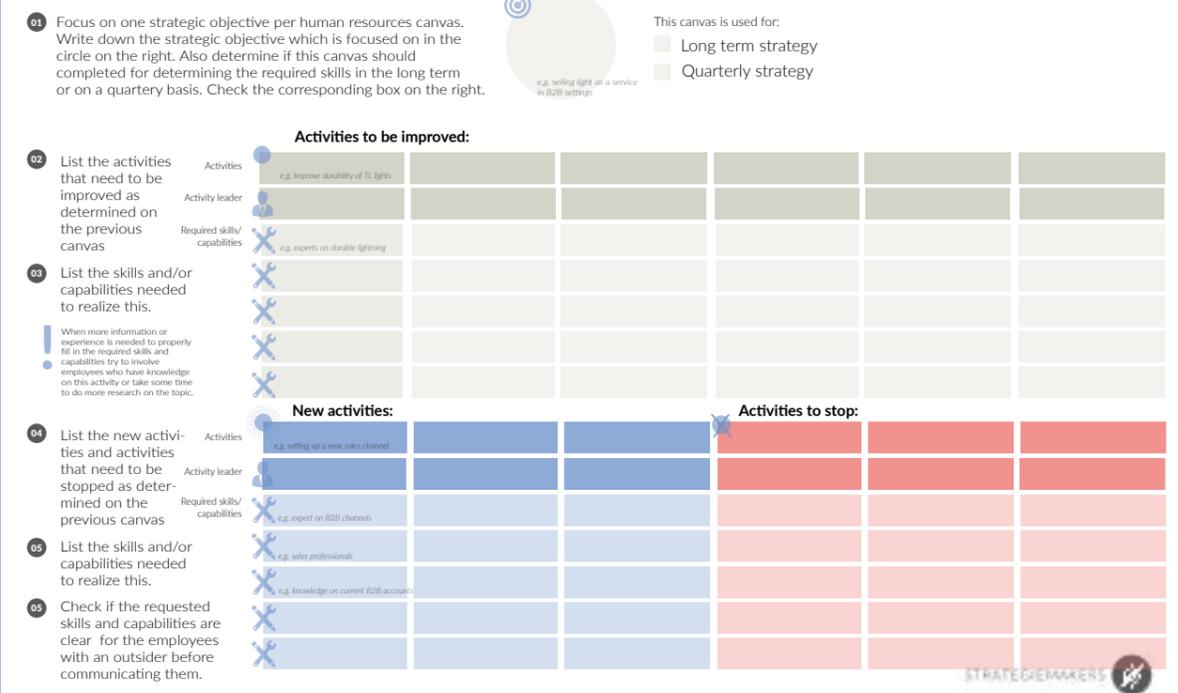


CANVAS 03

FOR THE MANAGEMENT

REQUIRED HUMAN RESOURCES CANVAS

Description: this canvas facilitates management teams in the translation of strategic objectives in required human resources by discovering what skills and capabilities are needed for the realization of the strategic objectives.



FOR THE EMPLOYEE

BOOKLET

a booklet for employees to...

Discover your skills and ambition and link them to the strategic objectives of your organization

This booklet is designed for you as an employee to discover your skills and ambition in a generative way. Several explorative questions are asked which will guide you in clarifying what skills you desire to develop and what ambition you want to pursue. To embed your desired development in the organization, you will link your personal development with the strategic objectives.

Follow the numbers (1-5) to fill in the questions in the right order. You can write your answers in the gray boxes or on the lines but feel free to depict your answers in other ways.

Introduction

Instruction: fill in the answers in the grey boxes

01 My name:

02 My job:

03 Draw your position in the organisation on the right:

04 Write a description as you would post on LinkedIn about yourself which aligns with your job

1

Determining skills

01 Draw what your average day at work looks like:

02 What do you like about your workday?

03 What would you don't mind losing

2

Evaluating skills

Instruction: fill in the answers on the lines

01 For what work activity do you get out of bed in the morning?

02 My colleagues would say I am good at... (a skill or activity you were complimented on by a colleague)

03 What activities would you like to stop doing?

04 This is what I aspire in colleagues and I would like to be able to do myself...

3

Skills outside of work

01 What activities are you good at and love doing at outside of work?

02 What makes these activities so much fun?

03 Are there certain skills you would want to carry over to your work life?

4

Discovering your ambition

01 Look at the strategic objectives and their matching activities.

02 How does your current job align with the strategic objectives?

03 Imagine the organisation in two years when the strategy is realized. What would you like your role to be?

04 If everything was possible what kind of work would you want to do?

5

Link with the strategic objectives

01 Look at the strategic objectives and their matching activities. Think about what skills you like using, which you discovered in the previous canvases. Fill in the 'contribution cards' on this canvas after choosing two strategic activities from the strategic objectives that make your heart beat faster. To fill in the last box, look at the requested skills matching with the strategic activities you chose, and decide with what skills you would like to contribute. Rate your mastery and aspirational level on these skills guided by the key given on the right side of the canvases. These 'contribution cards' will be used by the management team during the planning of the realization of the strategic objectives.

KEY
 01: the requested skill and not mastered (that I need this skill)
 02: I need it (I can understand work done with this skill)
 03: I need it (I can connect content with this skill)
 04: I need it (I master this skill well enough to teach it to others)

Contribution card 1

My name:

I would like to contribute to the realization of the strategic objective:

In the activity:

Where I would like to do work such as:

Because:

Based on these skills/capabilities:

Contribution card 2

My name:

I would like to contribute to the realization of the strategic objective:

In the activity:

Where I would like to do work such as:

Because:

Based on these skills/capabilities:

6

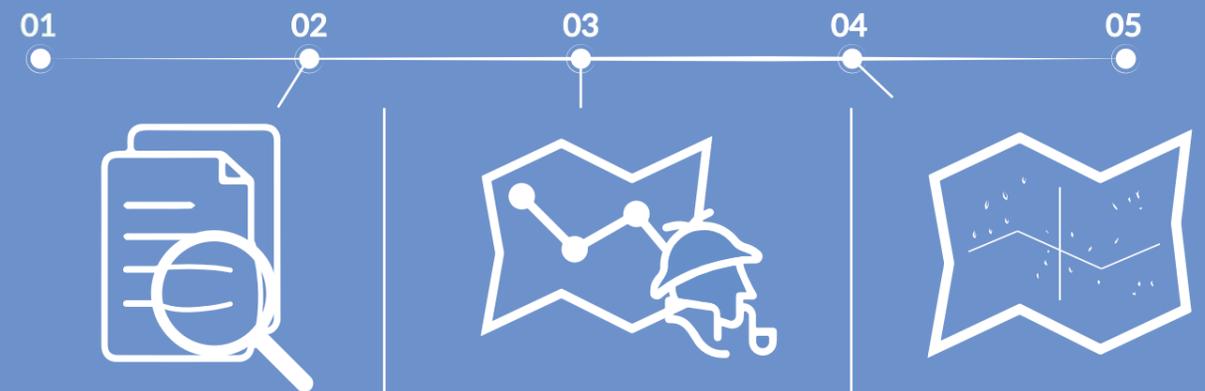
USE OF THE CONCEPT

The concept can be used by applying the entire time-line, from the phase just after the formation of the strategy until the launch of the realization, as shown in Figure 43. When using the concept fully, the employees' motivation to work on strategy realization is most likely to increase. The canvasses can also be used separately, see Figure 51. This could be an added value for Strategiemakers because of the wide variety of clients the company has. Using the full concept would probably only fit in a few situations, since organizations can have pre-set processes for specifying strategy or gathering employee's desires for development. By making the canvasses stand alone, it is more probable that they will be used more often. The canvasses can also be used during meetings of Strategiemakers with their clients to trigger them to think about certain topics, like including their workforce widely in strategy realization or pinpointing the kind of employees needed to make the realization of their strategy a success.

THE SOLUTION IN CONTEXT

In this thesis information is gathered on the beliefs of Strategiemakers, the strategic process and the employee's perspective on it based on three aspects: organizational context, employee's experience and human motivators. The solution posed for motivating employees to contribute to the realization of strategy should fit within this context in order to function. In the table on the next page is presented how the solution functions in this context.

USE OF SEPARATE PARTS OF THE TIME-LINE



Defining strategic needs of the organization

The profiles of the employees needed for the strategy realization can be discovered through these canvasses

Explore desired personal development of the employee

With this booklet or canvasses, the employees is guided in pinpointing their desired personal development and linking it to the strategic objectives

Creating an overview of the characteristic of the available employees

These canvasses can be used to provide an overview of the skills of the existing workforce. Missing skills could be localized.

Figure 51: Use of separate parts of the time-line

Topic	Requirement	'SIR' Canvas Kit
 <p>Contribute to the improvement of the realization process</p>	<p>It should contribute to the improvement of strategy realization by motivating employees to take action.</p> <p>It should contribute to solving the challenge of triggering employees to contribute to strategy realization.</p>	<p>The 'SIR' Canvas kit contributes to solving the main research question by stimulating employees to contribute to strategy realization by means of linking their personal development to the organizations strategic objectives.</p> <p>By creating a solution that facilitates a win-win situation between the employee and the organization the employee could become intrinsically triggered to contribute to strategy realization. In addition, the motivation of the employee is appealed to tap into their personal purpose and mastery, see 'employee motivation' on the next page.</p>
 <p>Organizational context</p>	<p>It should fit how the employee is embedded as described strategy realization models.</p> <p>It should fit the actors in the strategy realization process</p>	<p>The solutions can be used in all three of the ways organizations approach strategy realization. In the linear model the solution could be a first step in giving the employee a bit of autonomy in their choice of task whilst still controlling the placement process. The adaptive model matches the most seamlessly because this model already encourages the employees' development. The canvas kit gives a practical tool for support. In the interpretative model the solution can be used with a focus on shaping a guiding path for individuals to contribute to strategy. Helping guide the employees' focus by letting them see the match in their skills and the strategic goals. In this model the decision of how an employee will contribute is more appropriately made by the employees themselves instead of the manager.</p> <p>The early adaptors can be pointed out by this concept and thus can be chosen to be used optimally during strategy realization. The bakers are aided in finding their strength and guided in finding a way to use it to the maximum. Therefore, the employees, who are naturally more susceptible for change, are able to function to their fullest potential. The resistor should not be taken into account.</p>
 <p>Employees' experience of strategy</p>	<p>It should fit the way the employee experiences the strategic process as described in the change model with the phases: Awareness, Understanding, Acceptance, Action.</p>	<p>The solution is designed to include employees in the realization process which could improve the employees' experience of the strategic process and help them to picture how the strategy will influence their day-to-day work. It not only improves the experience of the acceptance phase, but simultaneously informs the employees again on the strategy, helping the entire strategic experience of the employee.</p>

Topic	Requirement	'SIR' Canvas Kit
 <p>Employee motivation</p>	<p>It should fit the way employees experience motivation by stimulating their autonomy, purpose and/or mastery.</p>	<p>The 'SIR' canvas kit facilitates the motivation of employees by translating the strategy into a personal purpose which appeals more to an employee because it stands closer than an organizational strategy. By combining this purpose with an opportunity to develop mastery this solution is likely to appeal to the motivation of the employee.</p>
 <p>Strategiemakers</p>	<p>General beliefs</p> <p>Provide practical tools and skills as opposed to big plans</p> <p>Educating their clients by showing, doing together, doing independently</p> <p>Innovation, strategy and organization are intertwined</p> <p>Continuously switching between action and planning to validate assumptions</p> <p>Beliefs about strategy</p> <p>The strategic process should be continuous as opposed to a multi-year activity</p> <p>Strategy should be created together with employees</p> <p>Employees can be stimulated by giving them autonomy</p> <p>It should fit the existing approach of working with canvases, and fit their current strategic approach.</p>	<p>The canvas kit provides a practical and straightforward approach to the realization process by creating a direct link to change in activities and what is required to realize it.</p> <p>The discovered theory can be used for educating clients on the realization process and the canvas kit lends itself for co-creating an improved realization process together with the client, which can later be repeated independently.</p> <p>The kit shows the inseparability of strategy and organization and uses this to its benefit.</p> <p>By using the kit on a quarterly basis the assumptions on required skills are continuously validated and updated</p> <p>Since personal development is a continuous process and the canvas kit also allows for a quarterly strategy revision, it matches with their belief of the strategic process being continuous in stead of linear.</p> <p>By giving employees a chance to show their desired contribution to the realization, the realization is co-created with the management and the employees.</p> <p>The concept stimulates the employee to think about their role in the organization and its objectives which could stimulate the employee to become more autonomous.</p> <p>The solution is based on the same means Strategiemakers uses, the canvas. The kit extends the current strategy repertoire of Strategiemakers, since the solution focusses on the guiding policy phase. Their current assortment primarily focusses on the strategy forming step.</p>

IMPLEMENTATION

The 'SIR' Canvas Kit, delivered in this thesis, is still conceptual, the recommended further development of the "Strategy through Inclusive Realization Canvas Kit will be discussed in the form of a roadmap along three future horizons. An overview of the roadmap can be seen in Figure 52.

HORIZON 1 - During horizon one, further validation of the concept should be done to ensure it will bring value to organizations. Firstly, the canvases should be improved by using it at client's and develop the flow and questioning. Simultaneously an experiment can be set up at Strategiemakers itself, to see what the result is of listening better to the desired personal skills of employees and the appointing of tasks. If Strategiemakers were to continue with the concept, it would be recommended to discuss the though-principle with clients to validate in what kind of organizational context the concept would be most effective. After this, tests with parts of the concept can be executed at clients to test if the realization of the strategy is likely to improve by the specification of the required skills and/or the combination with desired employee development. There can also be tested if all employees should be included in the process or only a certain group.

HORIZON 2 - If the interest in the concept is proven, and increase of the realization appears likely in the first horizon, in the second horizon the concept could be taken to a next level by digitalizing part of the tool. It would be important to keep the conversations between the line-manager and the employee face-to-face, since this is expected to be crucial to enhance the relationship between the employee and organization. The rest of the process could be accelerated by making it digital. This digitalization also gives Strategiemakers an opportunity to gather big data on the compositions on organizations and their strategy process. This information could be insightful for developing new tools for the support of strategy realization. Next to this, the information could give Strategiemakers extended knowledge on the realization process in order to advise their clients better.

HORIZON 3 - During the first and second horizon experience on the realization trajectory is gained by placing the concept in different organizational contexts and by observing the effect of the concept on the strategy realization. By helping clients with setting up their strategy realization

with this concept, Strategiemakers could gain much experience with using this concept but also with the general realization phase in different contexts. When enough experience is gained in this field, Strategiemakers could call themselves experts on helping organizations design an inclusive strategy realization, and make this one of the expertises of their service. General guidelines to help organizations with taking into account employees during strategy realization could be formed and promoted amongst clients.

A FIRST TEST AT STRATEGIEMAKERS

During the process of completing this thesis, the concept was already being implemented at Strategiemakers itself. Together with one of the founders of Strategiemakers, the first two canvases were completed by using the strategy of Strategiemakers. Due to confidentiality reasons the results will not be presented. From this first test was experienced that the concept pinpoints challenges in the realization prior to the start of the realization because it forces a certain specification. By thinking about the required skills, one is forced specify the strategy, and by doing this one gets a feeling if the realization of this strategy is realistic with the existing skills and capabilities. During the session it was found that a part of the strategy was challenging to realize because the required skills and capabilities were not present within the organization. Everone felt this latently, but by making it specific with the canvas, one is triggered to solve the lack of capability or reconsider the strategic objective.

Another benefit that was found during the use of the canvas was that the specification showed that to many strategic activities were trying to be realized at once. Due to the specification, priorities were easier to make.

Lastly, the advantage which was experienced was that the design checks whether there are already employees who have experience with certain topics. In the case of Strategiemakers, there was looked for someone with experience with setting up a digital community. Some could have done this for their sportsclub for example, which would be beneficial for Strategiemakers. Setting out requests on that kind of skills and capabilities also encouraged a T-shaped development of employees, which was experienced as positive by Strategiemakers.

ROADMAP

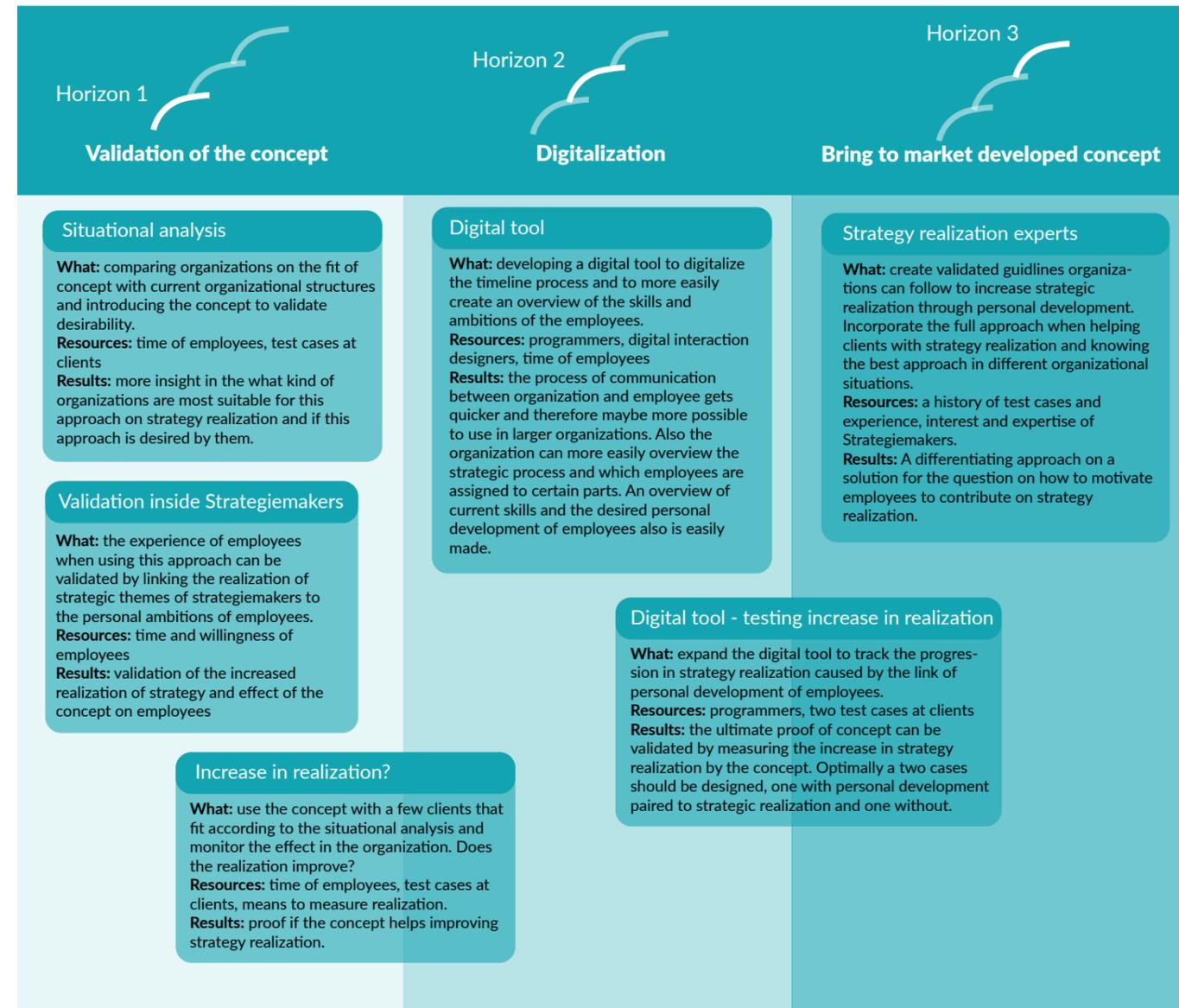


Figure 52: Roadmap of the concept

VALIDATION

In order to validate the applicability, value and usefulness of designed canvas kit, a few validation activities were performed. These activities focussed on finding out the relevance for employees, the relevance for organizations, and uncovering if possibility of improved strategy realization and the validation of the clearness of the canvasses. In Figure 53 can be seen which validation activities were executed and how these four topics were validated. The insights gathered on the clearness of the canvas design were incorporated in the chapter "Design Development Process", thus these will not be discussed in this chapter. The validations described in this chapter were executed with an early iteration of the concept. However, since the thought principle behind the canvasses of both the concept and the final product are the same, the validation insights are interchangeable. The goals of the three validations discussed in this chapter, are summarized below.

Validation of improved strategy realization – the goal of this validation was to uncover if the realization of the strategy improved. Since this is difficult to measure in the scope of this project. The question was asked to the participants if improvement of the realization was expected and what would prove this.

Validation of value for the organization – the goal of this validation is to uncover if the organization sees value in giving the employee an opportunity to participate in the realization by linking personal development with the realization. And if the organization sees value in using this canvas kit to support this process. Also, it would be insightful to find out if it is possible to match the current personal development processes of employees to strategy realization (on a regular basis).

Validation of value for the employee – the goal of this validation was to uncover if the knowledge of the employees' own ambitions/skills is less latent and more explicit after using the canvasses. Next to this, it was beneficial to uncover if employees felt more triggered to take action on the strategy realization because the canvas kit helped them uncovering their desired skills. The approach and the full findings of this step are presented in Appendix H.

VALIDATION METHODS

Validation with employees

The validations test to measure the value of the canvasses directed to employees and to measure the value of the overall process for employees

VALIDATIONS

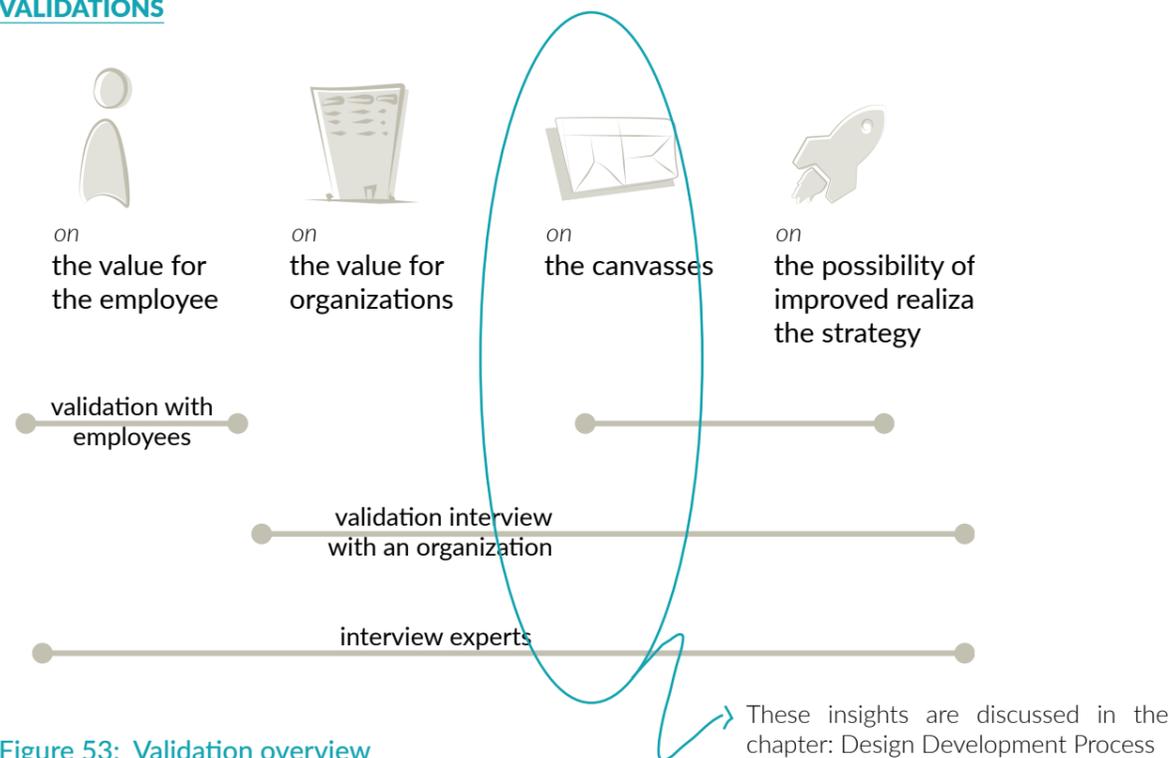


Figure 53: Validation overview

is done with employees from Strategiemakers. Since they had formulated a strategy for the organization a month ago this was a good timing for validating if the link to personal development was found appropriate. During a two-weekly company meeting at Strategiemakers a validation test was performed with eight employees of Strategiemakers where they were asked to fill in the strategy contribution canvas and the ambition canvas or the skill canvas. With an elaborate questionnaire after filling in the canvas their opinions on the canvasses, the thought principle and expectation of improves strategy realization were gathered.

Validation with an organization

To gather insight on the value this canvaskit would have for an organization, a client of Strategiemakers was interviewed. Two employees concerned with the realization of a innovation initiative within the organization for one day a week were used to validate three topics, as can be seen in Figure 53. Both participants were managers to a certain amount of employees. The strategy of their organization entailed three topics: passion, innovation and specialism. Since these participants were managers to a certain extend and since their work activities were related to strategy realization they were considered to be a sufficiently experienced with strategy realization in organizations to validate the canvaskit. The fifty minute long interview was recorded and listened back later to structure the insights.

Validation with independent experts

The employees at Strategiemakers are seen as experts on the topic of strategy and organizational structures since they have been involved in many innovation and strategy trajectories. Their opinion on developed the thought principles was asked every two-weekly organizational meeting. Next to this, two independent experts were interviewed in order to validate the value of the canvasses and if the thought principle of the concept went beyond the perspective of Strategiemakers. One expert was a consultant on a specific strategy realization methodology (OKR) and focussed on start-ups and at ING. The second expert was a professor at the Erasmus University of Rotterdam focused on leadership and communication, in particular in innovation and operational settings. His expertise was rich on the topic of employee psychology because the base of his career lays in the psychology domain.. Both interviews were approximately an hour and entailed all validation

topics. They were listened back and insights were structured.

INSIGHTS OBTAINED FROM THE VALIDATIONS

The most important insights which were gathered from the validations are presented below. They are discussed per validation topic, identical to the ones presented in Figure 53, and in addition some insights on the validation of the principles of the concept is based on are shared.

Insight on the concept's principles

All participants of the validations were positive about the approach on including the employees' perspective in the design of strategy realization. Similar principles on employee involvement in the development of the organization, were found in a research of one of the experts. This confirms the relevance of this topic in organizational development.

"Your findings stated the same as the core of what we are saying in our research, that is a validation for both our work. Unlike your work, our work is purely based on theory." - Prof. dr D.A. Stam of Innovation Management at Erasmus University of Rotterdam

An expert confirmed that top-down owned strategy is often a challenge during strategy realization. The importance of the translations of strategy to an bottom-up carried idea is seen as difficult yet crucial for success. This canvaskit is seen as a tool to facilitate the start of this turn around.

"If the strategy determines what the consequences are for you, as an employee (top-down), then you are no longer empowered" - Prof. dr D.A. Stam of Innovation Management at Erasmus University of Rotterdam

Since personal development is a process which is often a positive experience for employees, this toolkit is seen as a way to use strategy as a positive force of change which can be empowering. Most drivers for employees to change are negative, i.e. reorganizations.

"Now we are talking about a positive force of change with the whole organization and I am able (as an employee) to explain how I contribute in my way" - Prof. dr D.A. Stam of Innovation Management at Erasmus University of Rotterdam

"There are two types of approaches to motivate others to change: 'having to change' and 'wanting to change'. Often 'having to change' ways are negative, your concept uses a 'wanting to change' approach which is nice because it is a positive way of motivating to change" - Expert on strategy realization

The canvaskit is a valuable solution to the problem at hand because the theory is translated into something practical that can be used to make a difference.

"What we do is only theoretical but the idea of translating this knowledge into a practical tool is very valuable" - Prof. dr D.A. Stam of Innovation Management at Erasmus University of Rotterdam

The use of purpose in the tool enhances the chance of this concept being successful. Strategy was experienced only to provide purpose when it provided the employee factors within their reach to change. The concept facilitates vague goals being translated into specific activities and required skills which employees can relate to.

"As an employee you do not get out of bed in the morning to contribute to vague strategic goals, those are too abstract. These have to be peeled down until it is translated into something seizable for the individual employee" - Expert on strategy realization.

The possibility of incorporating the process in current systems is confirmed. The organization with which a validation was preformed, already had a system which also took strategy into account when determining personal development. In addition at another organization (as told by the expert on strategy realization), personal goals were set in line with organizational objectives which even created strategic autonomous behavior from time to time.

"This is already happening a bit at our organization.. ..Slowly managers are being pushed to set personal goals matching the strategy with their employees" - Employee of the organization

The thought principle of linking personal development with strategy realization is seen as a chance to seize opportunities by the employees of Strategiemakers who were part of the validation. However, it could be concluded that there were additional steps needed after filling in the canvas to make the employees feel involved with strategy realization, filling in the canvas was only a step in the right direction.

6 out of 8 participants found that the link of personal ambitions to strategic themes would trigger them to seize opportunities - Validation test with employees of Strategiemakers

Insights on the perspective from the employee

It is regarded crucial for the employees' motivation to feel involved in the strategy. Involving employees actively in the development of the organization gives them the feeling they are appreciated and part of a bigger whole. This feeling of belonging is crucial for employees to be happy and valued in the organization.

"As an employee I want to belong somewhere, if you do not feel you belong somewhere, you feel abandoned. This is a very strong primal force" - Expert on strategy realization

When all employees are taken into account in this concept, a very broad support for the strategy could be created with this concept. Since the organization only exists because of their employees, it is recommended that everyone should be considered to be important for strategy realization. By this an organization shows they care about all employees and thus enhances the relation with them.

"The organization is its employees. The manager is not more 'the organization' that operational employee is 'the organization'. It would be very empowering to include operational employees because they also are motivated by having a purpose" - Prof. dr D.A. Stam of Innovation Management at Erasmus University of Rotterdam

The concept of discussing the employees' contribution to the strategy, facilitates a climate which stimulates employee initiative. Employees then get acknowledgment in their contribution to the strategy and feel they are supported in the realization of it. Because of the acknowledgment and approval of their contribution, their feeling of belonging in the organization also increases which positively influences the motivation of the employee.

"By translating the strategy in a way for employee to know exactly how and where they can contribute, a strong concept is created because you feel you know your contribution is appreciated" - expert on strategy realization.

The canvases appeared to make employees more aware of their personal development. However, they did not feel very prepared for a meeting with their manager on this topic. An iteration on this was made.

7/8 participants have a clearer view of their ambitions or skills, 2/8 participants found the canvases helpful in preparation of a meeting with the line manager about their contribution to strategy realization. - Validation test with employees of Strategiemakers

An employee of the organization interviewed for the validation linked his development to the strategic themes last year. He said it acknowledged that his personal interests were meaningful for the organization and thus made him more aware of how his behavior matched with the organization, which gave him a boost.

"It is nice that you get confirmation of the fact that your personal activities also help the organization and you get acknowledgment of how this matches, that gives a boost, yes" - Employee of the organization

Besides this, he emphasized that the result of matching the personal development depends on the kind of employee. Some employees are naturally more motivated or involved in the organization. This will have an influence on how you should involve them in this process. The insight on differences between employees confirms the persona's found during the research.

"It is very dependent on the level of the employee and their personality. I have a sense of responsibility, then you are very intrinsically motivated. So, for me it works in this way" - Employee of the organization

Insights on the perspective from the organization

The role of the manager was seen as very important for this concept to succeed. Managers have to guide the employee well in the execution of their set goals and they have to accept that employees can only be motivated for realization when the ownership of it is handed over to the employee. Although there will be many challenges for managers, they can also use this concept to their benefit because it is a good tool to manage employees without telling them what to do, which motivates employees on the autonomy side of motivation.

"It is important to think about how you can manage people without telling them what to do" - Prof. dr D.A. Stam of Innovation Management at Erasmus University of Rotterdam

The interpretive approach to strategy realization (letting employees free in how they contribute) is new for organizations and remains still to be broadly accepted and developed. The individual path by which employees should be facilitated to contribute is currently doubted to be successful. Although success experiences are already felt at ING. This canvas kit triggers organizations in a good way to start thinking about this concept.

"Springest works with Holocracy [a specific work method] which is build around the individual power of the employee. However for many organization this is still far in the future" - Expert on strategy realization

Most organizations experience difficulties in translating broad strategy into specific tasks. This model facilitates this well.

"That is the biggest struggle of organizations, getting it specific on team level and on personal level" - Expert on strategy realization

This concept proves an manner to see if the employees in the organization have the skills needed for successful strategy realization. This might give insight in what kind of new employees to hire in order to develop in the desired way.

Insights on the possibility of an increased amount of realization of the strategy

If the realization will improve is experienced as dependent on many factors, i.e. communication of strategy, repetition, translation to specific and measurable goals, the way of managing, and if ownership of the content of the strategy is co-owned by the employee and manager. Many aspects discussed during the validation activities indicate the concept can cause an increased amount of strategy realization but since many factors influence this it is difficult to establish. Only experience will tell. Although, this the employees at Strategiemakers saw the value, and might use it with clients.

6/8 participants scored higher then 4 on the statement "I see value in the use of this concept, or parts of it, at clients"

LIMITATIONS OF THE VALIDATIONS

Since the validations are mostly done by discussing hypothetical situations it is difficult to say of if the canvas kit will improve strategy realization. Their was established by many participants during the validation activities they see the potential of it. Especially the value for employees, and the relation between the organization and employees is highlighted. To know this concept would increase the amount of strategy realization should be tested preferably in a long term situation. Small tests can also be performed for an scoped validation. For example a test case can be set up where participants' motivation to start tasks can be tested in two cases: one cases where their development is connected to the task and one case without their development connected to the task.

X. CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION

Conclusion | Concerns | Recommendations | Implications | Further research | Reflection | Personal stance |

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this project was to design a solution which improves strategy realization by motivating employees to take action. To reach this goal, extensive empirical and analytical research was conducted to comprehend the strategy realization process and employees' perspective on the strategy. Nineteen interviews were conducted, with Strategiemakers, independent experts, and managers and employees from four highly varying organizations who are experts by experience. Besides this, twenty-two questionnaires were completed and analysed regarding the employees' experience of strategy realization. This study shows that strategy realization is often difficult for organizations, which was defined by six specific challenges of which triggering the employee to contribute to strategy realization was in the scope of solving. In order to find out how to motivate the employee, the perspective of the employee was considered. This consisted of three aspects: the employees' organizational context, their experience of the strategy and what motivated them. This employee focussed approach resulted in the idea that the realization of strategy could be improved by creating a win-win situation between the employee and the organization.

The insights of the research led to the design of a trajectory, facilitated by the '*Strategy through Inclusive Realization*' (SIR) Canvas Kit, which guides organizations in the process of motivating employees to contribute to strategy realization. The design offers a practical approach which is straightforward to implement in an organization as opposed to existing solutions. The SIR Canvas Kit motivates employees to contribute to strategy realization by linking their desired personal development to the desired development of the organization, the strategy. The organization is facilitated in defining the skills

and/or capabilities required for the realization of the strategy and the employee is facilitated in uncovering their desired personal development. After collecting this information, line-managers link the required skills for the realization and the desired skill development of the employees. A mutual agreement should be made between the line-manager and their employee to maintain a good relationship. After using the SIR Canvas Kit the realization of strategy can commence with intrinsically motivated employees, and because of this the challenge of strategy realization is addressed by creating a win-win situation between the employee and the organization.

This thesis demonstrates a design approach and presents the SIR Canvas Kit, designed to be used by organizations to improve their strategy realization and by the company Strategiemakers in order to facilitate clients better in facing the challenges of the strategic realization process. In hindsight, looking the original assignment, it can be concluded that this project has provided a new way of addressing the challenge of strategy realization; from the employees' perspective. This thesis provides insight into the challenge from this perspective and proposes a practical and straightforward design, which could improve the realization of strategy. Not only does the design guide organizations in strategy realization, it also improves the relationship between the organization and their employees because their wishes are considered. In conclusion, this approach and practical canvas kit are a step forward in improving the employees' motivation to contribute to strategy realization addressed from the employee perspective.

CONCERNS

As the value of the 'Strategy through Inclusive Realization' Canvas Kit is presented, concerns regarding the process also remain.

Firstly, organizations often already have existing policies and structures for parts of the process. During the empirical research there is observed that every organization had a different way of dealing with the strategic process. It is therefore difficult to develop a concept that is suitable for many organizations to use. This was solved by keeping the questions open for own interpretation and making the canvases separately usable. The canvases are a mere trigger for the topics one should consider thinking about when specifying strategic themes.

Besides the differences in strategic process which are observed directly, it is expected organizations also differ in their current approach on personal development. Organizations might already have successful processes where it is less suitable to make a link between an employees personal development and the strategic goals. In this situation also parts of the canvas kit still can be used to aid the process of realization or it can serve as inspiration to improve the link.

Another concern is the fact that organizations usually already have human resource managers who's job it is to match the right people to the right jobs inside the organization. This could form the idea that the employees' desires in personal development are already sufficiently met and therefore miss out on the opportunity to increase strategy realization. Besides missing out on increased strategic realization, this concept could still help these managers by creating an overview of the employees based on facts in stead of assumptions on the employee's desired development. By explicitly asking employees about their current skills, desired skills and their ambitions, they could uncover required skills which employees may have experience with outside of the work they are doing for the organization now. By making this explicit, there is not waited until the resource manager accidentally finds out this trait of his employee but it is deliberately looked into. Using the concept during the forming of the strategy realization could trigger the management to link human resources and strategy realization. It may open their eyes to design the strategy realization more inclusive.

A third concern is that this concept only supports the laying out of the policies to match personal development with strategic realization. The strategic realization itself is not helped directly. As was pointed out in the validation with employees, the actions that make strategy become reality are not directly helped executing. Thus, improved realization can not be guaranteed. The probability of strategic realization is only increased by tapping into the employees intrinsic motivation on the actions that are needed.

Another concern regarding the concept, is the fact that there could be a possibility that employees have no particular ambition or desired skills they want to develop. Then the intrinsic motivation link would not work for those employees. Form the validation with employees it appeared that the canvas helped employees in discovering their desired skill or ambition, therefore the concept could partly solve this complication. Besides this solution, it could also be the case that not every employee should be connected to the strategy realization. As explained the concept should result in ways employees can contribute to make it possible for entrepreneurial and inspired employees to participate. However, as seen in the persona's regarding strategy realization, this is mainly 'the opportunist' who probably will use these opportunities. It might be the case that other employees are inspired by the possibilities given to these employees and start pursuing these themselves. In this way the concept could enhance bottom up initiatives toward the organization.

A last concern is a concern of success. What will happen when a majority of employees want to link their personal development to strategic realization and therefore try to change from their current mastered position to acquire other skills and a new position. Many employees will be changing from their position and skill set in a short period of time which could have consequences for the organizations functioning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To develop the concept in a functioning product, further research on the functioning of the concept in organizations should be done. Firstly, it should be validated if the canvases trigger the organizations on the right topics and give them enough guidance in the design of their guiding policies in order to include the personal development of their employees. It would also be relevant to research the influence the personal development link has on the execution of tasks. Looking into the increase of action taken when employees can opt for tasks that increase the skills they would desire to work on.

The next step would be to research what influence this focus on the personal development of employees has on work that includes forging new paths, as is done with the realization of the strategy. Does it really increase the amount of action taken on these new ventures? It could also be difficult because employees need to master new skills and work on unknown ground with ambiguous goals.

When looking at the bigger picture, it would be interesting to look into what changes will occur in the dynamics of the organization when employees are actively stimulated in their personal development through the organizations strategy. Does it stimulate employees to change their expertise and move to a completely different job, or do most employees stay close to their current skills? What will happen when a majority of employees in an organization move around from their current advanced expertise to begin learning another skill at beginner level? Do the employees who change their mastery eventually deliver more work after they have mastered their newly acquired skill?

IMPLICATIONS

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Multiple new insights are existent throughout this project and thus could be contributions for theory on strategy realization. The specific steps the strategic process consisted of in the four organizations that were researched give an more detailed idea of the strategic process inside organizations. This result can be used to research the general topic of the strategic process in practice further or used as a basis for research on a more specific part of it.

Another insight of the research exists out of the challenges that were found in general strategic process and more specific the realization of strategy. These results can be used to compare other researches on challenges with the strategic process in order to locate challenges that are generic and thus should be important to address. The third insight from this thesis is the change framework that is found to be applicable for the processing of the strategy by employees. This model is not often used to describe the experience of the individual when translating strategy into action but is more likely to be applicable by the results of the research. The adjustments found as a result of the theoretical content analysis show that the model could also be experienced slightly different in practice. For theory this finding contributes an insight on how strategy is experienced from the employees' perspective. Not much information is know on this topic which makes it difficult to come up with solutions on strategy realization that are appealing to the employee. This finding could inspire other researchers to further examine the employees' experience of strategy and its realization.

Besides theoretically describing the experience of the employee on strategy also a translation is made to a solution for improving the strategy realization experience for the employee.

Throughout this thesis there are many insights that theory could use to build further on. These insights are: a map of specific steps the case organizations experienced during the strategy process, an overview of the challenges they might find during this process, a theoretical model on the experience of the informing on the strategy by the employee, and the translation of the employee-organization win-win into a tangible concept.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Since this thesis is mainly focused on the relation of scientific research to strategic realization in practice many managerial implications are already discussed. A short overview of the most important managerial implications are given.

Firstly, in this thesis insight is given on the challenges that could occur in the strategic process. These could be taken into account by organizations when embarking upon this process. Secondly, organizations could take into account the employee perspective when designing the strategic realization process (or other processes where particular behaviour is desired from employees). The strategic process can be perceived by employees as a negative development. By giving the employee the possibility to grab strategic realization as an opportunity for personal development, the strategy could turn into a more positive event for the employee. Organizations could try to make this switch from negative experience to positive opportunity for other organizational processes. Solving a problem by looking from an employee perspective also increases the chance of a solution which improves the organization-employee relationship because solutions are presented which also benefit employees.

Thirdly, the realization of strategy is likely to be experienced more positively when employees can use it as an opportunity for their self improvement. Linking opportunities which drives employees to work that is desired by the organization could be a transaction which makes both parties more content with strategy realization. Organizations could consider incorporating this approach for their strategy realization process in order to improve the amount of strategy realized.

In essence, the insights gained by this thesis could inspire organizations to be aware of certain challenges when embarking on strategy realization, solving managerial problems by addressing the solutions from the employee perspective, and improving strategy realization by making the link with personal development of employees.

FURTHER RESEARCH

A shortage of information scientific research exists on the process of strategy realization in practice. During this thesis a start is made by mapping the strategy realization process across four different organizations in practice. Because of the small case size that was used, the insights gathered were a first impression of the overall issues, and issues that lay on the surface of organizations. To get a full understanding of the challenges faced when dealing with strategy realizations in practice, more organizations should be researched.

During the empirical research conducted in this thesis there was initially focused on the entire strategic process. Discovering most challenges can be found in the phase where guiding policies are set up and realization is planned, steered the focus of the research on this topic. When researching further on this topic, it is recommended to include research on the existing policies and regulations in organization, since it appears that the design of these policies have a big influence on the way employees are able to participate in the realization process. Getting a better understanding of these processes will probably increase the impact that can be made in the organization and will give an opportunity to match a solution better with the existing policies and regulations.

REFLECTION

As a reflection on this concept, discussion is necessary to conclude if this concept is a desirable, viable and feasible solution for the problem posed in the design brief. These three factors are the critical for successful innovation solutions, see Figure 54 (Menold, Simpson, Jablokow, 2016).

DESIRABILITY

As can be concluded from the empirical and theoretical research, strategy realization is seen a challenge for many organizations. From the validations done with employees, experts and organizations it can be concluded that the theory behind the concept brings about a desirable solution to the approach to employees motivation on strategy realization. By looking at strategy realization from an employees' (thus user) perspective, this theory makes it better imaginable how employees would be motivated to contribute to strategy realization voluntarily. This new approach to strategy realization opens many opportunities to improve this process. The win-win situation that is forged between the organization and the employee, is thus seen as desirable. The theoretical knowledge gained on this topic was already used multiple times during the creation of the thesis itself. Also the concept is at the moment being used to specify the strategy of Strategiemakers. Which makes the knowledge generated and the practical concept desirable outcomes of this thesis.

VIABILITY

If the concept is a profitable solution is difficult to measure. The unique approach the concept uses, the link between strategy realization and personal development, could be a strong motivator for employees to contribute to strategy realization. From the validation with employees value of this connection is seen, and thus from the small test that was done one could conclude that the concept would stimulate the employees to grab hold of this opportunity of self development. If this would result in actual increased strategy realization the concept would be viable. But if the concept results in this is difficult to say at present. It is assumed that the amount of action on strategy realization will increase when employees are intrinsically

motivated but this can not be proven at the moment. Hence, the concept can be viable if the assumption that increased intrinsic motivation leads to more contribution to the realization of strategy is affirmed.

FEASIBILITY

The concept proposed could already be used by Strategiemakers as trigger for organizations to think about the proposed topics in the time-line. Although, carrying out the process as described in the time-line would only be possible for relatively small sized organizations or when only a limited part of the employees is included in the process. Besides the fact that the work required to discuss the personal ambitions with every employees is enormous which decreases the feasibility, it would also be highly unlikely to place every employee in a position they wanted. Adjusted programmes that try to link personal ambitions of employees to strategy through different channels could be more feasible. For example, incorporating the theory in existing employee development trajectories or only focusing on the development of a smaller special group of employees who's motivation is very important for the organization, like very high skilled employees or promising employees like trainees.

The process suggested in the time-line could be feasible for small sizes organizations, preferable big enough that not all employees are involved in the creation of the strategy but small enough to be able to speak to most employees on their ambitions in a relatively short term. For organizations this size it is also more relevant to find out the ambitions and skills of employees since most employees work on multiple kinds of projects and they could be more easily be switched around. Thus, employees could more easily could be assigned a desired task. The feasibility of the entire process of with the concept entails, is estimated to be not very high for large organizations, but the theory behind the concept could be adjusted to a feasible concept more suitable depending on the situation of the organization. The concept presented in the time-line would be more feasible for small sized organizations.

PERSONAL STANCE

Personally, I think the theory of stimulating employees by giving them the chance to pursue their personal development is a strong case. Approaching strategy realization from a 'user' perspective makes realization sound less difficult to stimulate in theory. It also could create a less negative ambiance around strategy realization. Currently this is often linked with change, and insecurity of employees' position in the future. In a most desirable situation strategy realization could be linked to opportunity.

When looking at the development of the current work environment, it can be observed that the role of the employee in organizations is changing. Organizations are changing the way they attract the right kind of work attitude within people by offering good work conditions and favourable regulations. In this way, they try to tap into a social obligation rather than an agreed obligation (Keller & Aiken, 2008). In my opinion this works better for motivating employees. The solution proposed in this thesis is a way for organizations to incorporate this same method for strategy realization. It taps into other soft drivers of a person rather than hard agreements. In my opinion this theory could be successful to increase the amount of strategy that is realized and also change attitudes of employees toward strategy. Since change is often seen as unwanted now it could be translated to an opportunity.

Although, in my opinion, the theory behind the concept could be promising, I think the concept is only one way to facilitate this process. Many other ways can be thought of to give employees the opportunity to link their personal development to the realization of strategy. The choice for canvases was driven by the fact that it is a method of working that fits well with Strategiemakers existing methods. This increases the chance of them incorporating the concept. Besides this the choice for canvases is also very suitable for this case because as a consultant you are mostly just bringing ideas and advice. These canvases can be a great way of nudging organizations on the possibilities the found theory could bring. These two reasons made canvases the best option for this thesis, but when looking at incorporating this win-win theory in organizations many other ways are possible. For example, organizations could organize a big event promoting the possibilities employees could grab to develop their own ambitions through strategy realization, or organize workshops where employees are helped in finding their own development desires with a matchmaker that finds a match between projects in the organization and their desires. Next to this, many other ways are possible to provide opportunities for employees to develop their personal ambitions and link this up with strategy.

You have now reached the end of my eight months of work, congratulations! I hope you enjoyed the read.

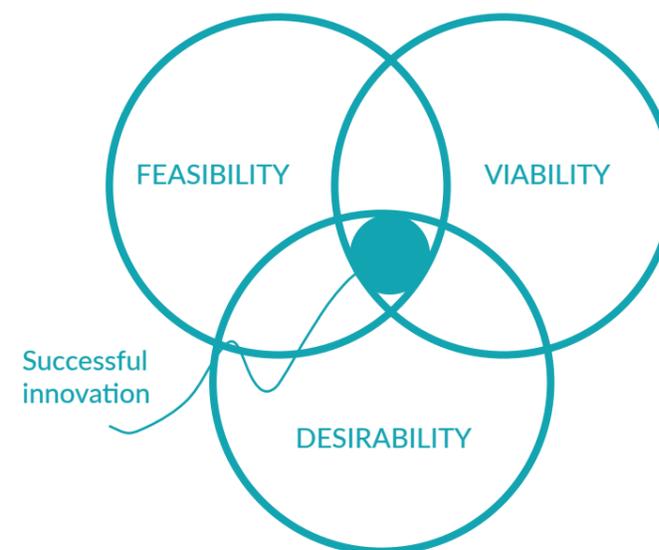


Figure 54: Important Factors for successful innovation.

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