

Optimizing a bottom-up strategy development process

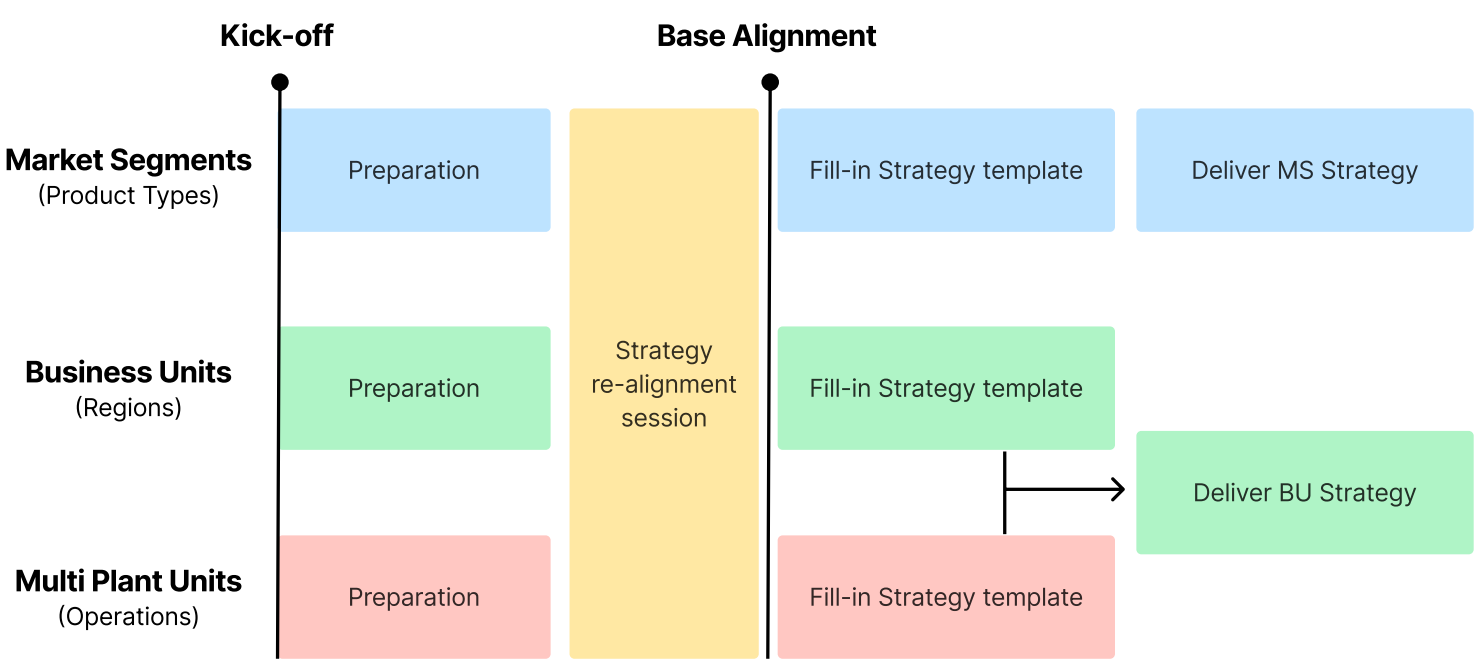
Improving strategic dialogue through customer-centric strategy re-alignment sessions.

Goal

The purpose of this thesis is to refine and propose an optimized bottom-up strategy development process to support the regional business units in creating their own strategy for a 3-yearly development cycle in the building & infrastructure.

Process

Through extensive research, including participatory experience, literature review, stakeholder interviews and AI-driven creativity sessions, an optimized and refined bottom-up strategy development process is proposed. Focusing on improving strategic dialogue between the three key departments of the strategy development process: Market Segments, Business Units and Multi Plant Units.



Implementing the strategy re-alignment session to create a base alignment

Market Segment 1A in BU 1 (MS 1, sub-segment A)		Downstream				Upstream			
		Customer 1				Customer 2			
		Example customers				Example customers			
Customer Needs		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Quality	Needs of Customer segment			x					x
	Company performance		x					x	
	Top competitor performance				x			x	
Competitiveness (Price)	Needs of Customer segment			x			x		
	Company performance		x				x		
	Top competitor performance			x				x	
Sustainability	Needs of Customer segment	x							x
	Company performance			x				x	+
	Top competitor performance		x				x		
Complete portfolio	Needs of Customer segment		x				x		
	Company performance			x				x	
	Top competitor performance			x		x			
Ease of use	Needs of Customer segment			x			x		
	Company performance				x				x
	Top competitor performance			x			x		
Innovation	Needs of Customer segment			x					x
	Company performance		x	+			x	+	
	Top competitor performance			x					x
Service	Needs of Customer segment				x				x
	Company performance		x	+	+		x	+	+
	Top competitor performance				x				x
Brand	Needs of Customer segment		x						x
	Company performance			x				x	
	Top competitor performance			x				x	

Customer needs map used in the future positioning strategy re-alignment session

Insights

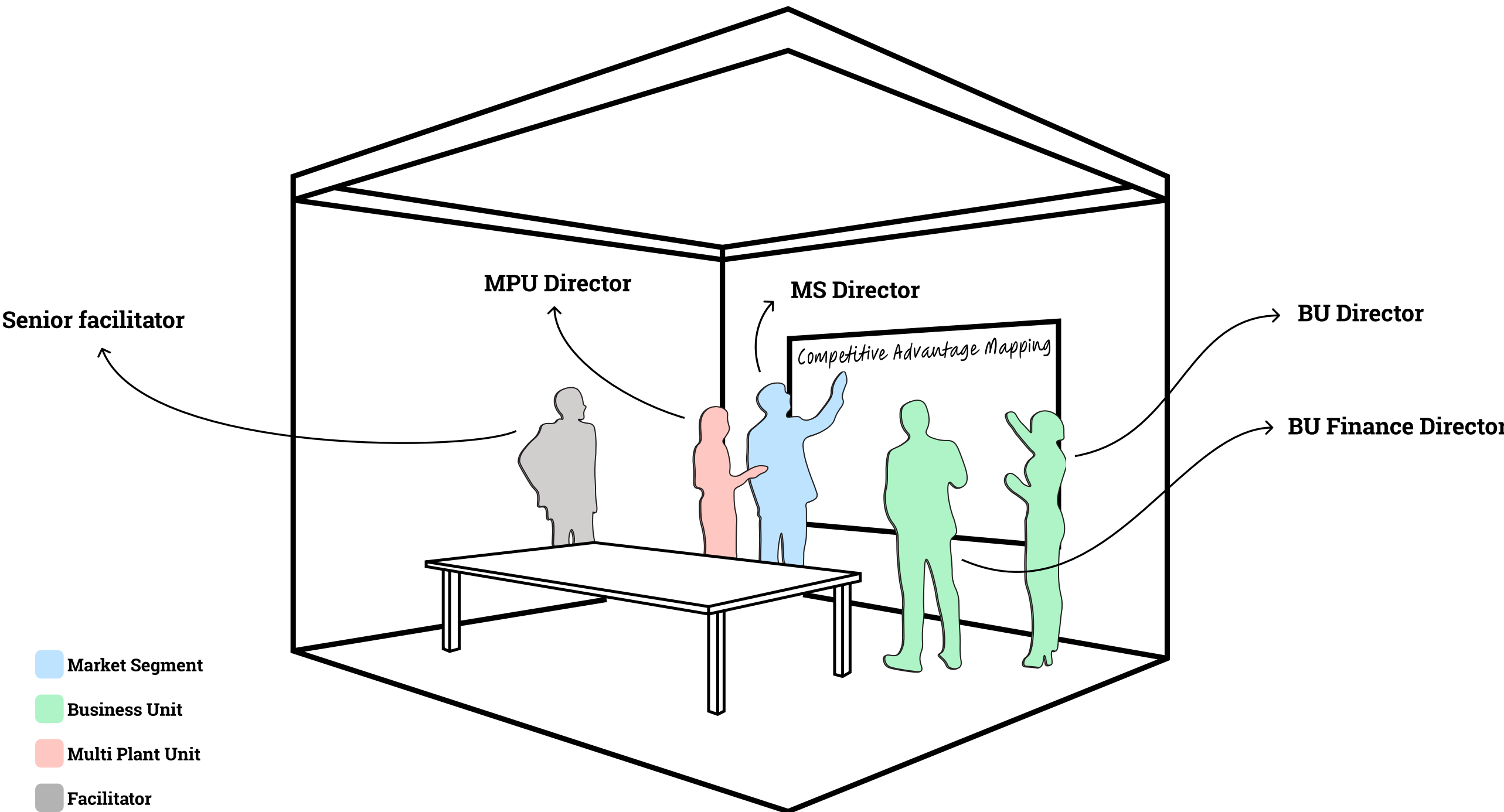
Due to a recent organizational transformation, the company transitioned from a global to a regional structure with a matrix model to better respond to local market needs.

Key findings reveal that the organization moved from strategic planning and strategic management approaches towards a more open strategy approach, by including more regional stakeholders in the strategy development process. While this shift enhances transparency and inclusiveness, it also increases complexity within the matrix structure, making interdepartmental integration critical for effective collaboration. As regional business units, market segments and multi-plant units are required to collaborate more closely, it is essential to establish structured interactions and collaboration that facilitate alignment and shared decision-making.

Participatory experience and stakeholder interviews revealed that poor communication and collaboration caused misalignment between regional and global initiatives. To address these challenges a solution is proposed that actively involves the key stakeholders in strategy re-alignment sessions to collective decide on future competitive positioning. At the heart of this solution is the principle of customer-centricity. As uncovered during the research, teams collaborate more effectively when they are united around a common cause. By focusing on the question "How can we best serve our customer?", the process shifts attention away from individual agendas and toward shared value creation.

Solution

The proposed solution has three key elements. First, **setting the stage** ensures all stakeholders are aligned on strategic priorities before discussions begin, with leadership guidelines preventing misalignment. Second, **organizing stakeholders** brings market segments, regional business units, and multi-plant units together in structured, focused discussions. Over two days, market segments rotate between different units every two hours, enabling deep collaboration and efficient knowledge-sharing. Finally, the **strategy re-alignment session** establishes a customer-centric competitive positioning, ensuring all stakeholders define a shared strategic focus before formal strategy development starts.



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