

Master thesis report

# OPTIMIZING A BOTTOM-UP STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Improving collaboration through  
customer-centric strategy  
re-alignment sessions

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**Written by**

*W. G. L. (Wolf) König*

4674545

*MSc. Strategic Product Design  
Faculty of Industrial Design  
Engineering  
Delft University of Technology*



**Author**

W.G.L. (Wolf) König

**Master thesis**

MSc. Strategic Product Design

Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering

Delft University of Technology

**Supervisory team**

Chair                    Dr. ir. Giulia Calabretta

Mentor                Ir. Sander Mulder

Mentor                Senior Manager Strategy & Transformation

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## Preface

Throughout my life I have always been super curious, especially the business and entrepreneurial topics have interested me. When I tell people that I study Strategic Product Design, I always explain it like: Strategic Business Development while combining people, business and technology. This broad range of topics have been the most important reason for me to choose Industrial Design Engineering.

In my mind, you are never done with learning and this education has given me the perfect balance of generalization for future deepdives in every domain I can think of. I think that being a curious generalist is crucial for solving complex and wicked problems that we face in the future.

During an internship after finishing my bachelor, I first came in contact with the organizational approach of combining people, business and technology. I had the opportunity to experience strategy development for the first time and I remember being fascinated by the complexity of internal organizational culture and people. My key memory from that time is that giving strategic direction does not work without fully aligning everything in your organization to move in the shared direction.

Fortunately, I was able to find a new challenge that continued where I left of, diving deeper into strategy development and alignment of internal organizations.

I would like to thank a number of people that were crucial in supporting me during my graduation project.

First, I would like to thank Giulia for being my chair during this graduation project. Whenever I would be lost in the endless exploration phase, you would always say exactly what I needed to hear to make my direction more concise. And often, just letting me ramble on about what I have been up to and telling me to enjoy the project, gave me the energy that I needed to continue.

Second, I want to thank Sander for keeping me asking questions about things that I had already taken for granted. Encouraging me to think broader and be open-minded for the unknown.

Thirdly, I would like to thank my company mentor for the many discussions and sparring sessions. It was a pleasure to learn more about the business side of strategy and experiencing first-hand what it takes to manage a strategy process for a large organization. Thank you for keeping me grounded when I was fully focused on abstract ideas.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family. Special thanks to everyone that took the time to read my report and gave tips to fine-tune the project to what it is today.

## Executive summary

This master thesis studies the bottom-up strategy development process of a large multinational in the building and infrastructure industry. 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. 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 improved strategic dialogue between the three key departments of the strategy development process: Market Segments, Business Units and Multi Plant Units.

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. The enhanced transparency and inclusiveness in the strategy development process makes the organization more resilient and competitive. The matrix structure also increases the complexity to effectively collaborate with interdepartmental integration.

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 collectively decide on future competitive positioning.

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.

This structured solution enhances collaboration, strategic alignment and customer-centricity while reducing inefficiencies caused by fragmented decision-making. Implementation follows a phased five-year approach, allowing the organization to gradually refine discussions, integrate customer insights and embed strategy re-alignment into its 3-yearly strategy cycle. By strengthening interdepartmental collaboration and reinforcing open strategy principles, this approach enables the company to balance global strategic direction with regional flexibility, ultimately improving execution speed, decision-making effectiveness and long-term competitiveness.



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## 2 Glossary

**BU: Business Unit**

Department that is responsible for a region consisting of multiple countries

**MPU: Multi Plant Unit**

Department that is responsible for multiple operational sites (manufacturing) within a region

**MS: Market Segment**

Department that is responsible for a global product segment

**S&T: Strategy and Transformation**

Department that is responsible for strategy planning and development

**P&L: Profit and Loss**

A Profit and Loss statement is a financial report that summarizes a company's revenues, expenses, and resulting profit or loss over a specific period

**VP: Vice President**

Second employee in command, directly under the CEO

**LT: Leadership Team**

Consisting out of the CEO, Global Functional Vice Presidents and General Managers

**AI: Artificial Intelligence**

The simulation of human intelligence in machines, used in tools like ChatGPT

**The organization:**

This project is executed for an organization which will remain confidential

**CAPEX: Capital Expenditure**

The money an organization spends to buy, maintain or improve its assets.

## 3 Introduction to the project

### 3.1 Introducing the research context

#### 3.1.1 Project background

In today's dynamic and highly competitive market it is increasingly critical for organizations to remain adaptable. This means that organizations have to be able to adjust their strategies promptly in response to evolving customer demands and market shifts (Day & Schoemaker, 2016). As global markets continue to evolve, many organizations are shifting focus from global operations towards regionalized strategies that address the unique characteristics and needs of individual regions (Proff, 2002; Verbeke & Asmussen, 2016).

This shift has led to a growing emphasis on achieving alignment between global strategic objectives and regionally tailored strategies. Large organizations must carefully balance the overarching goals of a global strategy with the specificity and responsiveness of localized approaches (Verbeke & Asmussen, 2016).

Over the years, strategy practices have evolved from strategic planning to strategic management and, more recently, to open strategy. Each of these approaches reflects a shift in how organizations formulate and implement strategy.

Strategic planning was dominant in the mid-20th century. It was rooted in rational and long-term forecasting with centralized decision-making (Ansoff, 1965). In this approach, top executives and specialized planning teams developed detailed strategies based on historical data. This approach assumed that the external environment could be controlled through structured planning.

As businesses faced increasing uncertainty and complexity, strategic management emerged. This shifted its focus from rigid planning to a more adaptive and iterative approach

(Mintzberg, 1994a). This school of thought recognized that strategy is shaped by both deliberate actions and emergent patterns. It emphasizes flexibility, organizational learning, and responsiveness to changing environments.

More recently, open strategy has transformed strategy development by making it more transparent and inclusive (Whittington, 2019). Unlike traditional approaches limited to top executives, open strategy involves employees at all levels as well as partners and customers in shaping strategic direction. Including employees lower in the hierarchy creates a bottom-up approach to strategy development ("Bottom-up Approach" 2024).

As a result, strategy has shifted from a closed elite-driven activity to a more inclusive and participatory process. This change reflects the growing complexity of organizational environments and the need for adaptive and responsive strategic thinking. In response, many organizations are now implementing bottom-up strategy development to enhance inclusivity and responsiveness. However, balancing this inclusivity with strategic alignment remains a challenge, particularly in large multinational firms with complex organizational structures.

#### 3.1.2 Problem statement

This project is conducted for a multinational organization active in the infrastructure and building industry. They are active in multiple global regions and serve customers in more than 80 countries.

The organization has recently transitioned from a global structure to a business unit structure model with matrix interactions. As a result, collaboration and coordination across different levels and functions have become more complex and challenging.

This transformation established regional business units to respond better to local changes and meet unique customer needs and regulations. This shift aligns with the idea that specific local customer needs, market conditions and government regulations create strong incentives for firms to develop location-

bound firm-specific advantages (FSAs) (Rugman & Verbeke, 1992). With overall strategic alignment the company aims to enhance agility, strengthen local customer relationships and balance regional flexibility by granting regional business units a greater autonomy

The organization has recently started their first bottom-up strategy development cycle to support their regional business units in creating their own unique strategy that aligns with the global strategic goals. By involving more stakeholders in the process, strategy is shifting from a traditional strategic planning and management approach toward a more open strategy model.

As with any first-time process, a right fit must be found within the organization's culture and structure. The process should be fine-tuned to work within the current matrix structure and align with the organization's way of working.

The challenge is to develop a process that empowers regional teams while ensuring alignment with the organization's overall strategic direction. This requires effectively involving key stakeholders and navigating the complexities of the newly implemented matrix structure.

### 3.1.3 Purpose of the thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to optimize and refine the current strategy development process of the organization. Through literature review and internal company analysis, optimization areas will be identified and a redesign will be made for their current process.

The goal of the strategy development cycle is to create direction and align the different business units to be able to reach the global strategic goals and targets. Additionally, the strategy deliverables are used as an execution and communication document for the strategy, allocating resources and defining short term action. Therefore, the design challenge is as follows:

“Refine and propose an optimized bottom-up strategy development process to support the

regional business units (BUs) in creating their own strategy for a 3-yearly development cycle.”

The design challenge consists of four key elements:

1. “Refine and propose an optimized process” – The focus is on iterative improvements rather than on a complete overhaul, ensuring a gradual and practical refinement of the existing strategy development process.
2. “Bottom-up approach” – The process will be inclusive, involving multiple layers of the organization, from country-level teams to global leaders, to enhance engagement and ownership.
3. “Support for regional business units” – The new process is designed specifically to help regional BUs develop their own strategies, providing them with the necessary structure and guidance.
4. “3-yearly development cycle” – The process will be repeated once every three years, ensuring a continuous and structured approach to strategy formulation.

## 3.2 Introduction to the company

### 3.2.1 Company overview

The organization under analysis is a multinational company in the building and infrastructure sector, active across multiple global regions. Its product portfolio spans diverse offerings, addressing the needs of both regional markets and global industries.

### 3.2.2 Organizational structure

The organization recently underwent a transformation that altered its organizational structure. Now, it operates under a matrix structure model, combining regional Business Units and global Market Segments to balance local responsiveness with global strategic coherence. Matrix organizations are characterized by dual reporting lines, cross-functional teams, and flexibility, enabling adaptability to changing market environments (Davis & Lawrence, 1977). However, this model is inherently complex and can be challenging to implement effectively (Ford & Randolph, 1992a).

Since the transformation happened recently, employees are still in the process of adapting to changes in the organizational structure and their responsibilities. As illustrated in Figure 1, the matrix structure is divided into three primary areas:

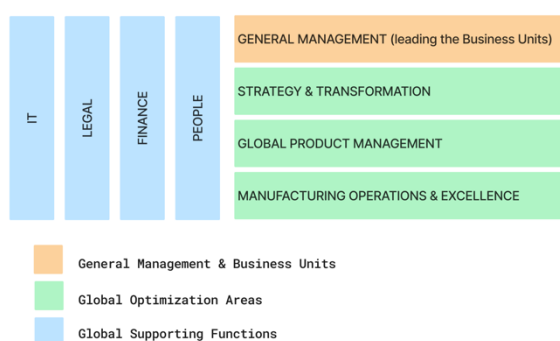


Figure 1: Organizational areas

#### Global Supporting Functions

These are supporting functions that operate at a global level, providing overarching guidance and resources for the organization.

#### General Management & Business Unit Area

This area is divided into regional business units, each comprising of a group of countries. Each business unit is responsible for its own Profit and Loss (P&L), ensuring accountability and regional focus. Additionally, two General Managers oversee the business units, each managing half of them to ensure focused leadership and coordination across regions.

#### Global Optimization Areas

These functions support both the business units and the global management team by optimizing business activities. Within this area, Global Product Management has directors each managing a distinct market segment (MS).

Figure 2 provides a visualization of the dual reporting lines within this structure, highlighting the interplay between global functions, regional business units, market segments, and the oversight by the two general managers.

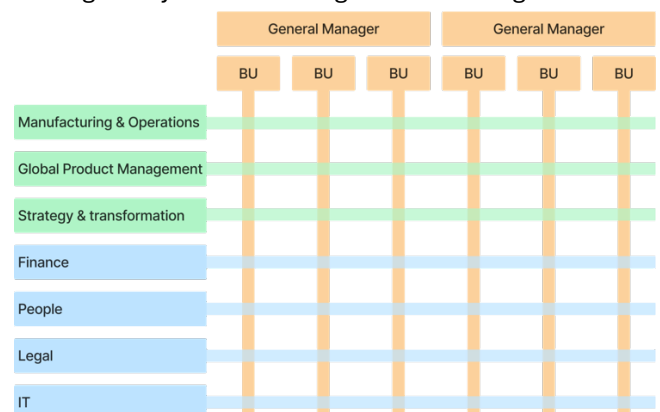


Figure 2: Matrix structure

### 3.2.3 Internal client

This project is conducted specifically for the Strategy & Transformation (S&T) team, which owns the strategy development process. The team consists of a Senior Manager and a Vice President and they are responsible for designing, maintaining and improving the process. As my direct client, I will work closely with them to make sure that any refinements align with their priorities and expectations.

The S&T team plays a central role in decision-making, as they are responsible for implementing changes and ensuring alignment with the organization's strategic goals. Regular

engagement with them will be essential to refining the process in a way that fits the company's structure and objectives.

I will have regular meetings with the Senior Manager to discuss findings, gather feedback and leverage their experience and insights. This ongoing dialogue will help shape a process that is both practical and aligned with expectations.

### 3.2.4 Implications for the project

The organization's recent transition to a matrix structure, with regional Business Units and global Market Segments, has created new dynamics in strategy development. While this structure creates both regional responsiveness and global strategic coherence. It also introduces complexities in collaboration, decision-making and role clarity. Employees are still adapting to their new responsibilities and alignment between regional and global strategies remains a challenge.

For the strategy development process to be effective within this structure, it is important to:

- Support the autonomy of regional Business Units, enabling them to develop regional specific strategies while ensuring alignment with global goals.
- Make sure the process functions effectively within the dual reporting lines of the matrix structure.

The refined and optimized process needs to be a balance between regional flexibility and global coherence, ensuring that strategy development within Business Units is both structured and adaptive to the changing needs of the organization.

## 4 Structuring the design process

This project applies a design thinking approach to solve complex challenges in the organization's strategy development process. Design thinking is a human-centered methodology that emphasizes iterative problem-solving, creativity, and stakeholder engagement (Brown & Kätz, 2009). By following a structured design process, this project aims to improve the organization's bottom-up strategy development and make it more effective and inclusive while ensuring alignment with strategic objectives.

The project follows the Double Diamond design process which is a framework that structures problem-solving into four key phases: Discover, Define, Develop and Deliver (UK Design Council, 2004).

### 4.1 Discover

The discovery phase of the design process was structured in a way to build a deeper understanding of the strategy development process within the organization. It began with **preliminary knowledge gathering (Chapter 5)** based on firsthand participatory experience. I supported the facilitation of the strategy process when it was launched for the first time, allowing me to directly observe both the challenges and key opportunities in executing the process.

Following this initial discovery, a **literature review (Chapter 6)** was conducted, guided by themes that emerged during the internship and early participation in the process. This provided a theoretical background for the identified challenges and potential improvements. To further deepen the analysis, **qualitative stakeholder interviews (Chapter 7)** were conducted with participants from the previous year's strategy process, capturing their firsthand experiences and perspectives. **Thematic analysis (Chapter 7.2)** was done using statement cards to categorize insights into key themes, helping to find opportunities for process improvements.

To analyze the gap between the intended strategy process and its actual execution, the well-documented planned process provided by the S&T team served as a reference point. A **current service blueprint (Chapter 7.2.2)** was then created to map how the process unfolded in practice, highlighting challenges and areas where the execution differed from the original design.

Finally, conclusions were drawn by combining both theoretical and practical findings, assessing their impact on the strategy development process.

### 4.2 Define

The define phase translates key insights from the discovery phase into concrete problem areas that need to be addressed. First, the main findings are analyzed and mapped onto the **current service blueprint (Chapter 7.2.2)** to visualize the inefficiencies, misalignments, and challenges within the strategy development process. This mapping helps to structure the identified problems in relation to the existing process.

Next, these problem areas are **prioritized (Chapter 8.2)** based on their significance and their potential to improve the process. This prioritization makes sure that the design project is focused on addressing the most impactful issues. Once the primary problem area is selected, it is translated into a clear **design challenge and a design goal (Chapter 8.3)** that guide the next phases of the project. Additionally, four sub-problems are defined, breaking down the central challenge into manageable components and providing a structured approach for solution development. This phase ensures that the design process is strategically directed toward solving the most critical challenges within the strategy development process.

### 4.3 Develop

The develop phase focuses on generating, refining, and structuring potential solutions for the identified problem areas. It begins with the



creation of an **interaction vision (Chapter 9.2)**, which defines the ideal way stakeholders should engage with the strategy development process. This vision serves as conceptual inspiration for developing creative analogies, helping to explore and better understand the design space. To initiate this process, an Interaction Vision ideation workshop was conducted with design students, using their creative perspectives to create ideas.

Insights from this session were translated into **H2 formulations (Chapter 9.2)**, framing key “How to” questions to guide further ideation. To expand on these ideas, an **H2 workshop using analogies (Chapter 0)** was conducted. Synthetic users generated by artificial intelligence were used to represent key stakeholder types involved in the strategy process.

The generated ideas were clustered into three sub-solutions, each addressing a specific aspect of the central problem. Based on discussions with the strategy & transformation team **three concepts were chosen (Chapter 9.5)**.

## 4.4 Deliver

The concept was evaluated in **iteration sessions (Chapter 9.6)** with internal stakeholders and external experts. Based on each iteration session, the concept was continuously adjusted to better fit with the stakeholders’ needs and organizational goals.

The **concept is presented (Chapter 10)** and explained per solution space. The concept was mapped on a **future service blueprint (Chapter 11)** to visualize the changes in the process, with a **detailed visual overview** of the exact solution flow. Additionally, an **implementation strategy (Chapter 11.2)** was created which shows the gradual implementation of the solution.

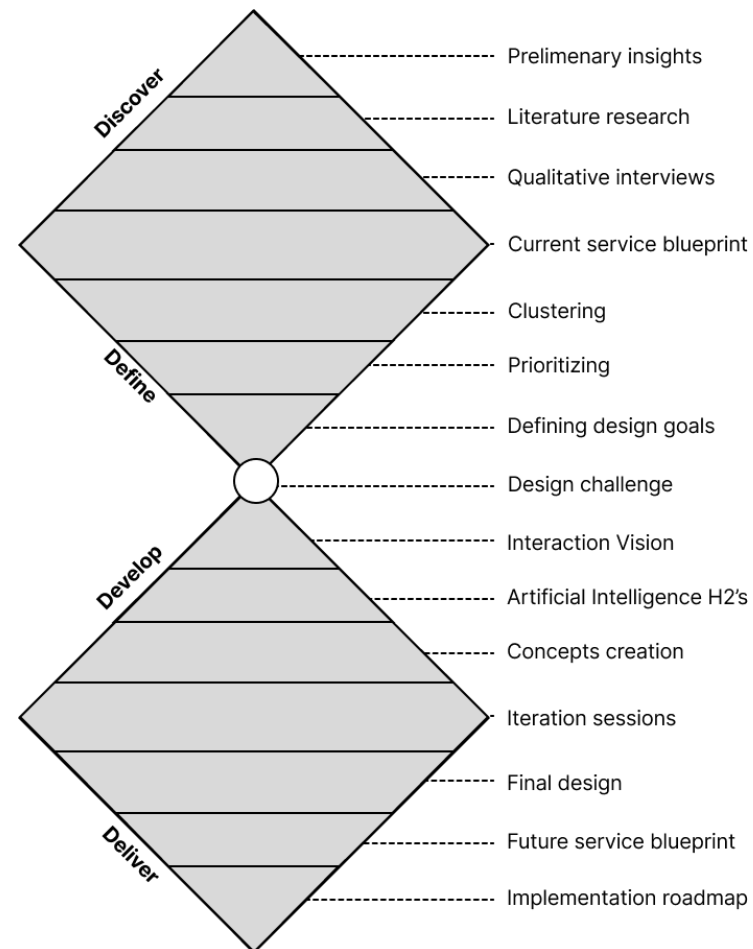


Figure 1: Double diamond approach

## 5 Preliminary Knowledge Gathering

### 5.1 Participatory experience

During the initial launch of the strategy development process, I had the opportunity to participate. My primary role was to facilitate the strategy development process and support the regional business unit teams in shaping their strategy.

Through this role, I gained hands-on experience with the financial templates and strategic documents used in the process. Additionally, one of the business units required a deeper strategic review, which I directly supported. This involvement also gave me the opportunity to participate in a town-hall strategy day, where the regional leadership team gathered to discuss country-specific strategies.

These experiences provided me with valuable insights into the inner workings of the strategy process, allowing me to identify key challenges and opportunities for improvement. Based on these observations, this chapter will highlight critical learnings from my participation and outline the necessary research topics for further exploration and refinement of the strategy process for the upcoming year. These preliminary findings will be tested further during my stakeholder interviews.

#### 5.1.1 Organizational observations

Every organization has its own unique culture and way of working. Through my experience, I have identified seven critical findings that influence the strategy process and overall project outcomes.

##### **Lack of formal processes and reliance on entrepreneurial mindset**

Compared to organizations of similar size, this organization operates with few formalized processes which employees link to its strong entrepreneurial culture. While this approach allows for agility and quick decision-making, it also results in inconsistencies, inefficiencies,

and a reliance on individual knowledge rather than standardized procedures.

##### **Adjusting to the matrix structure**

The recent reorganization has required employees to work in a complex matrix structure. This fundamentally changes how information flows and how teams collaborate. Unlike a traditional hierarchy, a matrix demands clear roles, responsibilities, and strong coordination. However, employees experience these aspects as not well-defined. Without clarity, collaboration decreases, decision-making is slowing down and frustration is created between teams.

##### **Lack of discipline in decision-making**

Employees perceive a lack of discipline in decision-making as frequent changes are introduced without clear follow-ups. Employees might hesitate to commit to new processes or initiatives because they are uncertain if the changes will last. This uncertainty lowers engagement and reduces confidence in strategic decisions.

##### **Market conditions and low employee morale**

The challenging and uncertain outlook of the construction market has led to low morale across the organization. Employees feel the impact of external pressures and uncertain market conditions. Combined with internal organizational challenges, this contributes to a sense of uncertainty and less motivation.

##### **Collaboration in a global matrix organization**

Operating within a global matrix structure introduces logistical and communication barriers, particularly with teams distributed across multiple regions and time zones.

##### **Limited informal interactions**

With many employees working remotely, there are fewer informal interactions, making it harder to build relationships and maintain a strong organizational culture. The office often feels empty, and spontaneous exchanges are rare. This lack of informal connection makes onboarding and networking within the company more difficult. Even after months of working at

the company, there are still colleagues who remain unfamiliar.

#### **Lack of a shared definition of strategy**

One of the most striking observations was the lack of a consistent definition of strategy among employees. Different individuals and teams interpret strategy in various ways. When asked about the company's overarching strategy, few could provide a clear and aligned answer. This misalignment complicates the strategy development process, as employees operate with different assumptions about strategic priorities and direction.

### **5.1.2 Process observations**

#### **Financially driven approach to strategy**

This organization takes a highly financial-focused approach. Strategic discussions are primarily centered around financial metrics, revenue targets, and cost structures. There is less focus on broader strategic direction, market positioning, or long-term vision. While the financial elements are essential, this narrow focus may limit opportunities for innovation and qualitative insights that could drive sustainable competitive advantage.

#### **Analysis-heavy with limited synthesis**

The strategy development process is heavily focused on analysis, focusing on data collection, performance tracking, and financial planning. However, there is limited synthesis, the step where insights from the analysis are translated to create strategic direction. As a result, the process risks becoming reliant on projections and becoming reactive, lacking the creative or forward-looking elements necessary for strategic flexibility.

#### **Unclear roles and responsibilities**

Roles and responsibilities within the strategy development process are somewhat unclear, as each team determines internally which members should follow up on different aspects of the strategy. This approach creates inconsistencies, as teams delegate responsibilities differently. In some cases, a lack of ownership led to gaps in deliverables and

missed timelines, delaying key strategy milestones.

#### **Limited guidance and support for participants**

Most of the responsibility for completing strategy templates rested with individual departments, under the assumption that they would naturally fill them in correctly since it was in their best interest. However, many employees were not specialized in strategy creation, this leads to inconsistencies in how the templates were completed. Without structured guidance or support, the quality of strategic input will vary between departments.

#### **Linkage between processes**

The strategy process lacked clear integration with other key organizational processes, such as budgeting, commercial planning, and operational planning. This misalignment made it difficult for departments to incorporate strategy into their broader annual planning cycles, increasing the risk of double efforts and inefficiencies.

## 5.2 Key conclusions

Based on my preliminary findings during participation in the strategy process, three key topics require further literature research:

### 1. The Concept of Strategy

Different stakeholders within the organization have various interpretations of what strategy means for their teams and the company as a whole. These different perspectives can significantly impact how a new strategy is developed and implemented. Understanding these variations is crucial to designing a strategy that is both aligned and actionable. A deeper literature review will explore how different definitions of strategy influence the role of strategy in organizations.

### 2. The Strategy Development Process

There are clear differences between the strategy development approaches I have encountered in academic settings and those practiced in the workplace. To better contextualize these differences, it is important to examine existing schools of thought on strategy development. Research will focus on identifying different strategy development frameworks, their applicability in organizational settings, and how they compare to the current approach used in this company.

### 3. Collaboration in a Matrix

The change towards a matrix structure seems to be a crucial driver for changing the strategy development process. At the same time, employees struggle to adapt to the new structure, and collaboration between the departments has been difficult. The literature review will explore the complexities of a matrix organization and what collaboration means in this setting.

These participatory observations provide insight into my perspective on the strategy process. It is essential to understand how stakeholders perceived last year's strategy process. This will be explored through qualitative interviews. The questions used in the qualitative interviews are

based on the findings of the participatory experience. This allows for a deeper analysis of challenges, opportunities, and potential improvements tailored to the organization's unique context.

## 6 Literature review

Based on the preliminary insights, three key topics have been identified as critical to optimize and refine the strategy development process. This literature review explores (Chapter 6.1) the concept of strategy, (Chapter 6.2) strategy development processes and (Chapter 6.3) collaboration in matrix organizations. The first section examines how strategy is defined and its role within organizations, addressing the ambiguity of the 'strategy' topic. The second section analyzes different strategy development approaches, discovering traditional strategic planning, strategic management and open strategy. The third section discovers how employees in matrix organizations engage in collaboration.

### 6.1 Concept of strategy

#### 6.1.1 Definition of strategy

The concept of strategy has been widely discussed in the literature, with authors offering different definitions and perspectives. Exploring these different perspectives helps us understand how the ambiguity of strategy affects its meaning and impact on organizations.

##### **Different perspectives on strategy**

Porter (1996) defines strategy as differentiation, emphasizing the importance of delivering a unique mix of value through distinct activities. Chandler (1962) focuses on deliberate planning and resource allocation, describing strategy as "the determination of the long-run goals and objectives of an enterprise and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals".

Hax and Majluf (1988) provide a more integrative perspective, describing strategy as "a coherent, unifying, and integrative pattern of decisions" that aligns organizational objectives, actions, and resource allocation while guiding relationships with stakeholders and adapting to changing environments.

Mintzberg (2007) offers a dynamic view, defining strategy as "a pattern in a stream of decisions," highlighting that strategy can emerge over time through consistent decision-making, whether intentional or not.

##### **Deliberate and emergent**

In Mintzberg's view strategy can be understood as a dynamic interplay between two distinct yet interconnected components: deliberate strategy and emergent strategy. The deliberate strategy represents the planned, intentional course of action developed by leadership to achieve specific organizational goals. It is a structured approach to aligning resources, priorities, and initiatives in line with a predefined vision. Meanwhile, at the bottom of Figure 2, the emergent strategy represents the unplanned actions and adaptations that arise in response to real-world challenges and unforeseen opportunities (Mintzberg, 1978).

Spontaneous adjustments arise from within the organization in response to change. Through continuous learning, organizations refine their strategy based on real-world feedback. This strengthens their ability to navigate uncertainty and stay competitive. Instead of strictly following predetermined plans they integrate learning into their strategy to remain agile and innovative while preparing for future challenges (Mintzberg, 1978).

As seen in Figure 2, the deliberate strategy and the emergent strategy, combine to form the realized strategy, the actual path an organization takes (Mintzberg, 1978).



Figure 2: Deliberate versus emergent (Mintzberg, 1978)

##### **5 Ps framework**

Since strategy is such a broad and multifaceted concept, Mintzberg (1987) introduced the five Ps for Strategy framework to highlight different ways strategy can be understood and applied. Strategy

as a plan represents deliberate actions aimed at objectives, while as a pattern, it reflects consistent behavior over time. Position focuses on how organizations align themselves within their competitive environments, and perspective captures the shared mindset and cultural values shaping decisions. Lastly, play emphasizes tactical maneuvers to outwit competitors.

These perspectives illustrate that strategy is not a singular, rigid concept but a multifaceted framework combining deliberate planning, emergent behavior, competitive positioning, and cultural influence. Together, they provide organizations with tools to navigate complexity and achieve sustainable success.

### 6.1.2 Role of strategy in organizations

Once a strategy is created, it plays a crucial role in guiding organizational behavior. Essentially, strategy can be viewed as a set of decision-making rules that shape how an organization operates and adapts (Ansoff et al., 1984). Ansoff et al. (1984) identify four key types of rules that guide this behavior:

#### Performance Yardsticks

These are metrics for evaluating the firm's current and future performance. Qualitative aspects are referred to as objectives, while quantitative targets are defined as goals. Increasingly, strategy tools such as the balanced scorecard are used to track and measure key performance indicators (KPIs), ensuring alignment between strategic goals and operational execution.

#### External Relationship Rules

These outline how the firm interacts with its external environment, including decisions about product development, target markets, and competitive advantage. This is often referred to as the product-market or business strategy. In recent years, external transparency around strategy has grown, fostering trust with shareholders and consumers. The rise of digitalization and the rapid information streams have increased the importance of public opinion,

making stakeholder engagement a critical element of modern strategy (Geddes et al., 2020).

#### Internal Organization Rules

These define the internal structures, relationships, and processes within the organization, commonly called the organizational concept.

#### Operating Policies

These rules govern the firm's day-to-day operations, ensuring consistency and efficiency in routine activities.

### 6.1.3 Conclusions

Strategy, as defined by leading authors, is not a rigid or clearly defined concept but rather a complex and ambiguous term. The contributions of the scholars illustrate that strategy has multiple dimensions, including deliberate planning, emergent adaptation, competitive positioning, organizational coherence, and performance evaluation (Ansoff et al., 1984; Chandler, 1962; Hax & Majluf, 1988; Mintzberg, 2007; Porter, 1996). Each of these scholars emphasize different elements, underscoring the complexity of strategy.

Understanding how strategy is defined and the role it plays within an organization, helps clarify its context and scope. With this understanding, a strategic process can be designed that fits with the organization's objectives and environment.

### 6.1.4 What it means for this project?

This wide range of perspectives is important for evaluating the organization's strategy development process. Initial findings show a strong focus on deliberate strategy with formal planning, resource allocation and performance monitoring. While this approach provides clarity and control it limits the organization's ability to adapt and learn. The current process does not fully support ongoing adjustments which reduces its flexibility in responding to change.

Strategy defines the actions the organization will take and sets boundaries on what it will avoid.

Recent leadership changes have introduced new interpretations of the concept of strategy which show how it evolves and is not consistent in organizations. This shift creates both uncertainty and opportunities for improving the strategy process.

The way strategy is understood shapes how it is designed and executed. A rigid focus on deliberate planning can limit learning and flexibility, especially in unpredictable market conditions. However, if strategy mainly serves as a communication tool for corporate leadership and investors a structured planning process may be necessary. The organization must find the right balance between strategic direction and adaptability to ensure long-term success.



## 6.2 Strategy development process

In this chapter, the three main frameworks in the development of strategy practices since the 1960s will be discussed. Firstly, strategic planning was introduced in the academic world in the 1960s by Chandler (1962) in his book: *'Strategy and Structure'*. Strategic planning grew in popularity in the 1960s and early 1970s. Secondly, strategic management is a framework from the late 1970s that continued to be important in the 1980s and 1990s. Lastly, open strategy was introduced in the 1990s and has become more mainstream in the early twenty-first century (Whittington, 2019).

### 6.2.1 Strategic planning

In the 1950s, faced with the challenges of rapid growth and increasing complexity, organizations turned towards long-range planning to forecast the future using historical data. However, as growth began to slow down and markets became saturated, companies looked for alternative approaches to strategizing. This led to the development of strategic planning, which assumes that deliberate strategy is essential to achieving long-term performance and targets (Ansoff et al., 1984). See Figure 3, for a comparison between long-range planning and strategic planning (Ansoff et al., 1984).

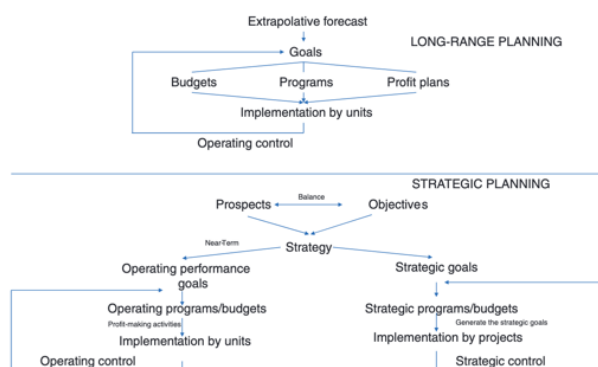


Figure 3: Long range planning and Strategic Planning (Ansoff et al., 1984)

Initially, strategic planning emerged as a budget exercise during the 1960s, focused primarily on resource allocation. By the 1970s, it evolved into

a more comprehensive framework, incorporating detailed analysis and competition analysis tools to guide decision-making and strategic direction (Bonn & Christodoulou, 1996). This evolution marked a significant shift in how organizations approached their long-term strategies.

Strategic planning involves several key elements (Ansoff, 1965; Ansoff et al., 1984; Mintzberg, 1987):

- Setting objectives
- Conducting internal & external analysis
- Formulating a strategy plan
- Implementing the strategy
- Monitoring and controlling progress

The process begins with assessing the firm's prospects through internal and external assessments. This is followed by a competitive analysis to identify areas for improvement and evaluate their potential within the competitive landscape. Strategic portfolio analysis then determines priorities and resource allocation, while diversification analysis identifies gaps and new business opportunities (Ansoff et al., 1984).

Together these steps formulate the overarching goals and objectives, which are translated into short-term performance targets and strategic goals. These are monitored through operational and strategic controls to ensure alignment and progress. This structured approach assumes that deliberate, well-planned strategies are necessary for achieving sustained long-term success (Ansoff et al., 1984).

Strategic planning is a formal, top-down and systematic process that focusses on achieving predefined goals and objectives, this works best in a relatively stable business environment (Ansoff et al., 1984; Langley, 1988; Mintzberg, 1994c).

Formal strategic planning processes have been widely considered to be in decline (Grant, 2003; Johnson et al., 2003; Mintzberg, 1994c). There is a risk of traditional strategic planning models becoming unoriginal and ritualistic (Hamel & Prahalad, 1994). Mintzberg argues that strategies can be better seen as emergent instead of deliberately designed (Mintzberg, 1994b, 1994a).



## 6.2.2 Strategic management

Strategic management emerged during the 1970s and 1980s as a complementary approach to strategic planning, addressing the need for adaptability in increasingly dynamic market environments. Mintzberg & Lampel (1999) define 10 different schools in strategic management. Ansoff described strategic management as a process for managing a firm's interaction with its environment, which includes strategic planning, capability development and change management (Ansoff, 1979). Within the strategic management field there are many different definitions and perspectives.

Strategic management tries to solve two key problems. First, diagnosing a firm's unique set of future challenges, threats, and opportunities. And secondly, designing and implementing a firm-specific response to address these challenges (Ansoff et al., 1984).

Ansoff et al. (1984) describes the strategic management approach to consist of two complementary systems: Strategic posture management and real-time issue management. Strategic posture management ensures the organization maintains a clear and deliberate long-term direction by aligning its goals and capabilities with its external environment. Real-time issue management complements this by providing the agility to identify and respond to unexpected challenges and opportunities as they arise, ensuring adaptability in dynamic conditions (Ansoff et al., 1984).

### Synthesis vs analysis

A critical part of strategic management is balancing analysis and synthesis in strategy development. Analysis breaks down complex information into smaller parts, helping organizations evaluate trends, assess market conditions, and identify strengths and weaknesses. This creates a foundation for understanding the competitive landscape and setting strategic priorities. However, analysis alone is not enough to develop effective strategies (Mintzberg, 1994c).

Synthesis is just as important because it turns analytical insights into a clear strategic vision. While analysis provides clarity, synthesis helps decision-makers recognize patterns, spot emerging opportunities and create forward-looking strategies. It requires intuition and creativity, making sure that strategy is not just reactive but also visionary. Finding the right balance is essential. Too much analysis can lead to over-planning and rigidity, while too much synthesis can cause a lack of structure and direction.

Strategic management uses both analysis and synthesis to help organizations adapt to uncertainty, stay competitive and integrate both planned and emergent strategies.

## 6.2.3 Open strategy

A major shift has been the increasing openness of strategy, a phenomenon that has emerged parallel to "open innovation" but brings unique challenges and complexities (Chesbrough, 2003). This openness in strategy refers to two key dimensions: inclusiveness, which broadens the range of participants in the strategy-making process, and transparency, which involves greater clarity in both the formulation and communication of strategies. Open strategy builds on the increasing trend of openness by adding its initiatives on the previous developments made by strategic planning and strategic management (Whittington, 2019).

### Inclusiveness

Inclusiveness in open strategy refers to the active involvement of a broader range of stakeholders in the strategy-making process. This dimension of openness expands participation beyond traditional decision-makers, such as senior executives or strategic planners. This increases the diverse perspectives from both within and outside the organization. Research highlights the significant value of including more stakeholders in strategy development (Rouleau, 2005; Westley, 1990; Wooldridge et al., 2008). By engaging a wider array of participants, organizations can leverage varied insights, foster creativity, and ensure strategies are more

grounded in operational realities. This broader involvement enhances the quality of decision-making and increases the likelihood of successful implementation, as stakeholders feel a greater sense of ownership and alignment with the strategic vision (Whittington, 2019).

### Transparency

Transparency in open strategy involves making the strategy-making process and its outcomes more visible and accessible to a wider range of stakeholders. This dimension of openness focusses on clear communication and transparency throughout both the formulation and implementation stages of strategy. Transparency makes sure that information about strategic goals, priorities, and decision-making processes are shared more broadly within the organization. Additionally, the strategy might also be communicated towards external stakeholders. Research suggests that increased transparency of strategy can enhance trust, align expectations, and improve collaboration across all levels of an organization, which in turn increases organizational performance (Berggren & Bernshteyn, 2007; Whittington, 2019; Whittington et al., 2011). By making strategies more transparent, organizations can reduce ambiguity, encourage accountability, and strengthen the connection between high-level objectives and day-to-day actions.

However, open strategy is not suitable for every organization. While its focus on inclusiveness and transparency can increase innovation and trust, it carries risks. By opening up strategy to more stakeholders, confidential strategic information may be exposed to competitors. Increased stakeholder participation can also complicate decision-making and lead to delays. For highly regulated or hierarchical organizations, the cultural and structural adjustments required for open strategy may outweigh its benefits, making it less applicable in such contexts (Whittington, 2019).

## 6.2.4 Conclusions

In reviewing the evolution of strategic development processes, it becomes clear that

each following framework has introduced a greater degree of openness through increased transparency and inclusion, see Figure 4 (Whittington, 2019).

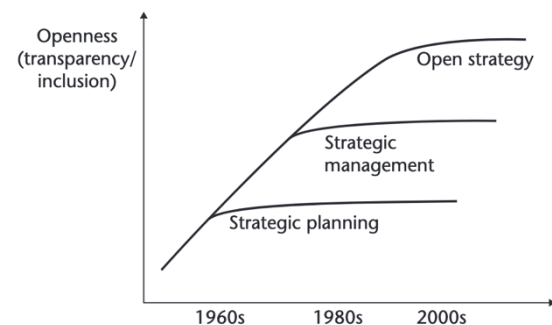


Figure 4: Increase of openness (Whittington, 2019)

Newer frameworks have not replaced traditional models. Instead, they often complement them. Strategic planning provided a structured, top-down approach but struggled in fast-changing environments. Strategic management responded by balancing deliberate planning with adaptability. As industries evolved, the need for broader participation led to open strategy, which emphasizes inclusivity and transparency.

It is important to understand the pros and cons of an open strategy. Inclusivity can improve problem-solving by bringing in diverse views and creating a sense of ownership. However, it can also add complexity and slow decisions. Each new framework builds on the last, increasing adaptability and stakeholder involvement. Instead of replacing old models, newer approaches combine key elements to create a more flexible strategy. The challenge is finding the right balance between structure, flexibility, and openness for effective strategy development.

## 6.2.5 What it means for this project

The current strategy process has attempted to be more open by including more stakeholders. However, multiple strategy processes run in parallel, leading to misalignment and limited collaboration. The market segments and business unit strategies are developed independent from each other, with limited

collaboration. Instead of benefiting from increased openness, these disconnected approaches result in fragmented strategies that do not integrate effectively.

It is clear that this strategy process is evolving towards the open strategy school in which there is an increase in transparency and inclusion, as seen in Figure 5.

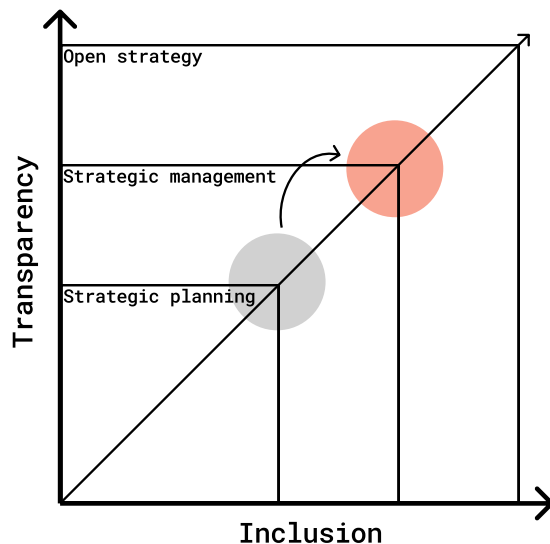


Figure 5: Changing approach to strategy development

### Strategy as Financial Planning

In practice, the strategy development process was primarily used as a tool for mapping financial projections. The leadership team used these projections to secure commitments from regional teams on financial targets and communicate targets to corporate leadership. A key objective of the strategy was also allocation of financial resources. This approach aligns with the strategic planning school which emphasizes structured long-term forecasting based on historical revenue data.

However, this method has significant risks, especially in volatile market environments. Relying on static projections makes it difficult to adapt to rapid market shifts which potentially leads to unrealistic forecasts and misaligned plans (Ansoff et al., 1984).

### Market positioning using strategic management

Besides the base of the strategy being linked to financial planning, the process also incorporated strategic management elements about strategic positioning in the market. Besides the baseline business that was projected based on historical data, growth projections were also identified as opportunities for future value propositions to better serve the market. Each region (BU) identified strategic choices and growth projects to focus on in order to improve the market position.

### Shift Toward an Open Strategy Approach

The current strategy process introduced greater inclusiveness, incorporating a bottom-up approach where individual countries and regions participated in strategy creation. This shift reflects principles of the open strategy school, which encourages broader involvement to produce more creative and operationally grounded strategies (Whittington, 2019).

Despite involving more stakeholders, leadership adjusted the final financial projections to match corporate ambitions. Regional teams saw their input changed without clear explanations making strategies less realistic and harder to implement. This also reduced their sense of ownership, as their contributions seemed overlooked.

These findings highlight the tension between structured financial planning and inclusive strategy development. This highlights the need to balance top-down strategic direction with bottom-up market insights to make sure that the strategies are realistic and widely supported across the organization.

## 6.3 Collaboration in matrix organizations

In this chapter, the structure and dynamics of matrix organizations will be discussed. Firstly, the concept of matrix organizations will be introduced with a definition provided by Davis and Lawrence (1977). Key characteristics will be highlighted, as well as the common challenges that arise from this structure. Secondly, the importance of interdepartmental integration within matrix organizations will be explored. Integration is divided into two complementary processes: interaction and collaboration (Kahn, 1996). Lastly, the philosophies behind interaction and collaboration will be discussed. Together, these elements are essential for ensuring that departments work effectively within a matrix structure.

### 6.3.1 What are matrix organizations?

Davis & Lawrence (1977) define a matrix organization as: “any organization that employs a multiple command system that includes not only a multiple command structure but also related support mechanisms and an associated organizational culture and behavior pattern”. It usually has a traditional vertical hierarchy based on functional expertise and a horizontal structure that typically focuses on projects, business groups or product development. In the case of this project, there are vertical functions and market segments and horizontal Business Units (regions) as seen in Figure 6.

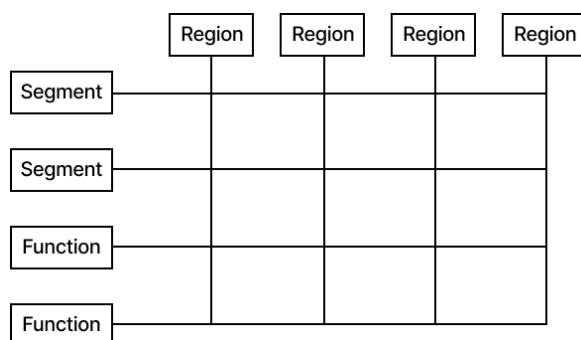


Figure 6: Dual reporting lines matrix structure

Key characteristics of matrix organizations include:

#### Dual Reporting Lines

Employees often report to both a functional manager and a project or product manager (Davis & Lawrence, 1977; Ford & Randolph, 1992a).

#### Cross-functional Communication

Enhanced cross-functional communication channels increase the flow of information across the organization (Davis & Lawrence, 1977; Ford & Randolph, 1992a)

#### Increased Specialization and Expertise

Employees remain part of their functional departments while working on diverse projects, allowing them to deepen their expertise in their field while gaining cross-functional experience.

Departments within a matrix structure are highly interdependent due to the dual reporting lines and necessity to communicate between departments.

However, matrix organizations also present notable challenges:

#### Ambiguity and Conflict

Overlapping responsibilities can create confusion over resource allocation, decision-making, and personnel assignments (Ford & Randolph, 1992b).

#### Strained Relationships

Functional and project managers may experience conflicts and individuals often struggle with conflicting priorities and diverse expectations (Ford & Randolph, 1992b).

#### Increased Costs

The structure typically involves more meetings, slower decision-making and higher administrative overhead (Ford & Randolph, 1992b).

Due to these complexities, effective interdepartmental integration is critical to ensure that these interdependent departments work together efficiently within a matrix structure.

### 6.3.2 Interdepartmental Integration

Interdepartmental integration is the process where different departments within an organization coordinate their activities and align their efforts to achieve common goals. It is a concept comprising of two distinct but complementary processes: interaction and collaboration (Kahn, 1996).

#### Interaction

Refers to the structural aspects of interdepartmental relationships, including scheduled meetings, standardized documentation, formal communication channels, and top-down instructions. Interaction serves to create contact and ensure the flow of information between departments.

#### Collaboration

Represents the affective, voluntary, and relationship-driven aspect of interdepartmental integration. It focuses on mutual understanding, a shared vision, collective goals, resource sharing, and informal cooperation.

While interaction provides the structural foundation, collaboration promotes the deeper alignment and synergy needed for true interdepartmental integration.

### 6.3.3 Interaction and Collaboration Philosophies

The philosophies of interaction and collaboration have different approaches to managing interdepartmental relationships:

#### Interaction Philosophy

Based on the transaction-based management theory, this approach treats departments as independent departments competing for resources (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995). The focus is on formal communication tools such as meetings, reporting systems, and documentation to facilitate transactions between departments (Kahn, 1996).

#### Collaboration Philosophy

Based on the relationship marketing concepts, this philosophy views departments as interdependent units working toward common goals (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995). It focusses on relationships building, strategic alignment, informal structures, joint rewards, and collective problem-solving. Collaboration fosters cooperation rather than competition (Kahn, 1996).

Kahn (1996) lists the following elements as crucial for collaboration and interaction, they are shown in Figure 7.

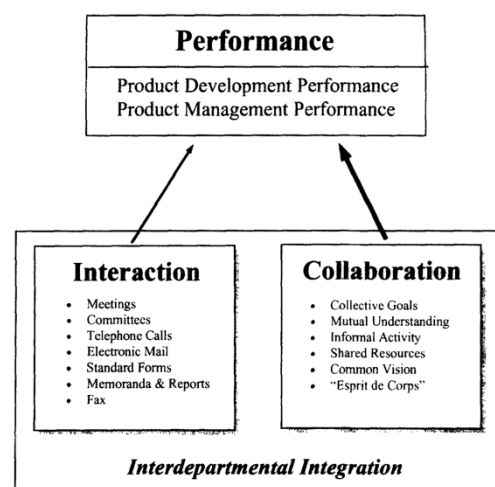


Figure 7: Interdepartmental Integration through interaction and collaboration (Kahn, 1996)

### 6.3.4 Conclusion

Matrix organizations combine vertical functions with horizontal business units. This structure helps teams share information and work across departments but also creates challenges like: unclear roles, resource conflicts and higher costs. To make the matrix structure work, interdepartmental integration is crucial.

Integration happens through two key processes: interaction and collaboration. Interaction provides structure with meetings, reports and clear communication channels to keep teams aligned. Collaboration builds trust and teamwork, encouraging departments to work toward shared goals.

For a matrix organization to succeed, it must balance structured processes with strong

teamwork. Too much focus on structure can slow things down, while relying only on collaboration can cause confusion. Finding the right mix helps organizations get the benefits of a matrix structure while avoiding its biggest challenges.

### 6.3.5 What it means for this project?

In the context of this organization, a matrix approach is already in place. However, during participatory experience, a lack of collaboration was identified. Improving collaboration is necessary to unlock the full potential of the matrix structure and drive organizational success.

Based on Kahn (1996) the following elements could be reflected in the process to promote collaboration:

**Collective Goals:** Success should be defined and measured in ways that show shared achievements.

**Mutual Understanding:** Making sure everyone is aligned on key organizational topics.

**Informal Activities:** Trust and open communication, as well as informal activities, should complement formal processes.

**Shared resources:** Highlighting the shared responsibility of resources.

**Common Vision:** Departments must align around common strategic objectives.

**“Esprit de Corps”:** A feeling of pride and loyalty should be promoted towards the group.



## 7 Company analysis

To validate the observations, assumptions and conclusions presented in Chapter 5 and 6, a company analysis was conducted. This analysis is based on qualitative stakeholder interviews and a review of the current process. A total of 11 stakeholders, from 4 different departments and 4 regions were asked about their experience about the previous strategy development process. This provided a deeper understanding of the company's context and the current strategy process. This understanding is crucial to improve and refine the process so that it better aligns with the organizational context. First the relevant stakeholders that are involved in this specific strategy development process are introduced. Then the stakeholder insights are linked to the literature research. Here we define how this organization sees the concept of strategy, and what role it plays in the organization.

Nine problem areas are identified based on the stakeholder interviews, these are mapped on a current service blueprint.

### 7.1 Relevant company stakeholders

The strategy process involves multiple departments within the organization, each playing a distinct role in its development and execution. These departments include the Leadership Team, Strategy & Transformation Team, Market Segments, Regional Business Units and Multi Plant Units

#### **Leadership Team**

The process begins with the Leadership Team, led by the CEO, who requests the strategy and establishes the overall strategic direction and priorities. The CEO is the direct sponsor for this project.

#### **Strategy & Transformation Team**

This team is responsible for managing and refining the strategy development process and is ultimately accountable for the process. Comprising a Vice President and a Senior Manager, the team translates the objectives of

the Leadership Team into a structured process designed to achieve the desired outcomes.

#### **Global Market Segments**

There are multiple global market segments. Each having a director and multiple global product managers. They oversee the management of product ranges, like lifecycle management and product innovations.

#### **Regional Business Units (BUs)**

The organization has multiple Business Units, each led by a BU Director and supported by Country Commercial Managers and regional supporting functions. These stakeholders ensure that regional considerations are effectively integrated into the strategy.

#### **Multi Plant Units (MPUs)**

The organization has a global Manufacturing, Operations & Excellence (MOE) team responsible for overseeing manufacturing plants and production. This team is structured into multiple Multi Plant Units (MPU), each serving a specific Business Unit (BU) region. While these stakeholders were not actively involved in the previous strategy cycle, they play a critical role in executing the strategy. Their involvement in future strategy development will be essential to ensure alignment between strategic planning and operational execution.

By involving multiple departments, the organization aims to take a holistic approach to strategy development. However, managing collaboration across this diverse and complex stakeholder network presents significant challenges, particularly in aligning global and regional perspectives.

### 7.2 Stakeholder insights

A qualitative content analysis was done to analyze insights from stakeholder interviews based on a thematic analysis using statement cards and themes (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). In appendix A, B and C the questionnaires can be found. Figure 9 gives a visual overview of the approach. A total of eleven, 30 min interviews

were held with stakeholders. In Figure 8 an overview can be seen of the stakeholders.

Strategy & Transformation	Business Unit	Market Segment
1 Vice president 1 Senior manager	4 Directors 1 Country manager 1 Business support	2 Directors 1 Global Product Manager

Figure 8: Stakeholder interviews

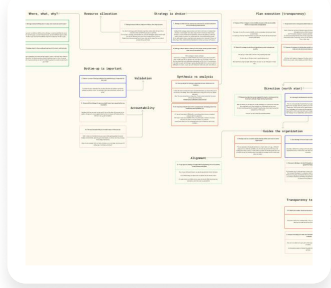
The interviews were processed into statement cards, these were categorized and ultimately themes were formed. These themes were translated into problems.

To better understand what these stakeholder perspectives mean in the context of this project, the problems are mapped on a current service blueprint. By mapping the insights on the process, it is possible to make the insights more concrete. Additional stakeholder insights from the interviews can be found in the confidential appendix D.

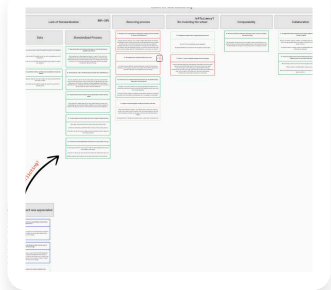
**Statement cards**  
Condensed meaning units



**Categories**  
Clustered statement cards



**Themes**  
Themes in the underlying meaning



**Translation to problem**  
Themes to problems



Figure 9: Thematic analysis approach



### 7.2.1 What does strategy mean for this organization?

During the interviews, it became clear that employees struggled to define the corporate strategy. While most agreed that strategy involves making choices, what to do and what not to do, there was a lack of clarity on the organization's market positioning. Many questioned around how the leadership team intended the positioning of the organization in different markets. This uncertainty led to a lack of clear guidelines when working on developing the regional strategies.

*"Well, strategy is choice, basically."* – P2

A key finding is that the perception of what strategy means for an organization is largely related to the person or team in charge of strategy. Prior to the transformation, the organization had a top-down structure with a CEO that took the lead in setting direction. Through the transformation, a new approach was launched which engaged the regional Business Units with more ownership and transformed the strategy towards a more inclusive and transparent process. This also highlighted the importance of creating regional differentiation and focus on the local markets. In this new approach, strategic management elements, about adapting to changing market conditions and introducing growth projects on a regional level were supported.

Due to the project timeline, I focused on developing a more inclusive and transparent process that would support regional teams in differentiating their competitive advantage. This in turn promotes interdepartmental integration and collaboration.

### 7.2.2 Current service blueprint

The Strategy & Transformation team documented the intended strategy process, including a full flowchart outlining the activities each department was expected to complete. However, beyond these planned steps, many informal interactions shaped how the process was actually executed. To create a more

complete view of the first strategy cycle, a current service blueprint was developed. This visualization was based on firsthand preliminary insights and stakeholder interviews, capturing both the formal process and the behind-the-scenes interactions. The complete blueprint, a detailed flow of the process and the used templates are available in confidential appendix E, F, G and H.

The defined problems were mapped on the current service blueprint to understand in which phases of the process, problems occurred.

A simplified service blueprint can be seen in Figure 10. On top of the current service blueprint, observations are mapped that identify key problem areas. There are 5 phases in the process:

1. Awareness
2. Preparation
3. Building
4. Reflection
5. Impact

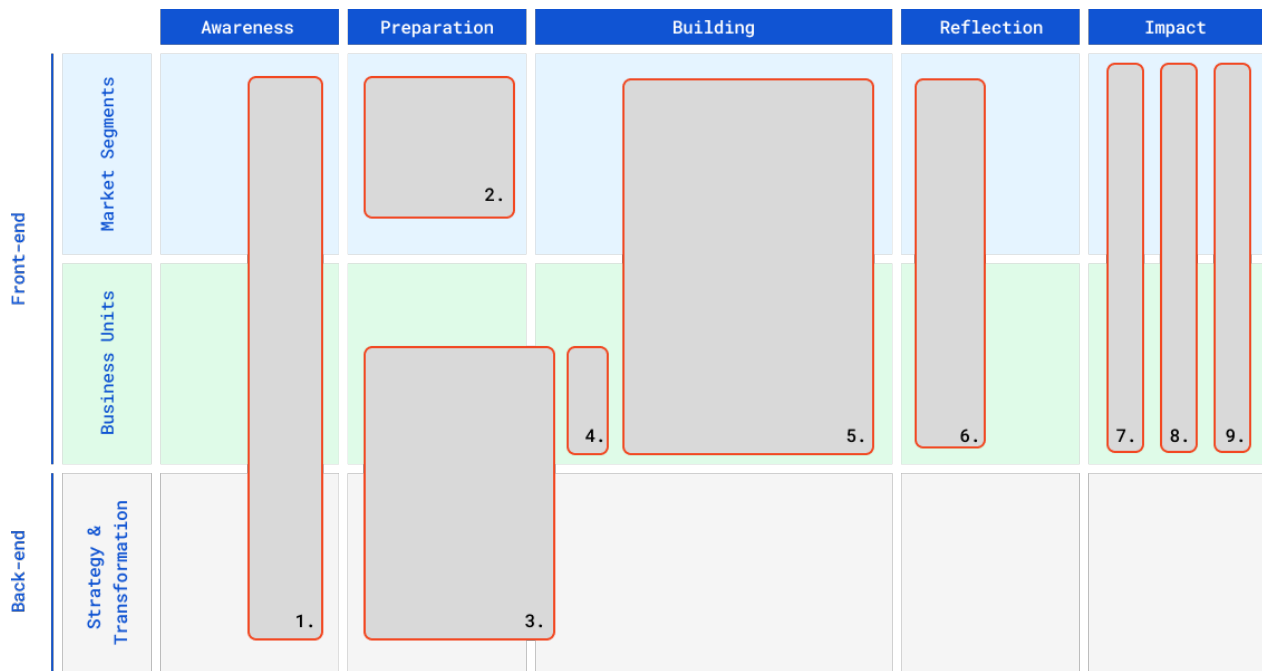


Figure 10: Simplified current service blueprint

### Awareness

During the awareness phase, the process was first introduced during a kick-off meeting. Expectations and timeliness were set, and a presentation was given about the steps in the process. From interviews it became obvious that the expectations were not very clear after the kick-off. After the kick-off, participants sensitized themselves with the process and expectations.

1. The teams were not activated and fully immersed in the strategy topics. Expectations were not clear and short timelines caused concern.

2. There were no templates available to request information from the business units. They created templates themselves, which were inconsistent per market segment.
3. There were no templates available to fill-in the strategy per country. During the process the Strategy & transformation team created additional templates to support the local teams.

### Preparation

During the preparation phase, delegation and planning took place in the different departments. This was not guided by the process, which resulted in differences between teams. The teams went through the templates to assess how they were going to acquire necessary information. It became clear for the Segments that they would need to acquire information from the Business Units. However, there was no clear guidance on how to do this, so they created their own template to request information.

### Building

The building phase was largely planned beforehand by the strategy & transformation team. This consisted of all the elements in the templates that needed to be filled in. There were some challenges with the Business Unit side of the strategy formulation, since there were no templates available for formulating the strategy per country. Overall, there was limited collaboration between the departments during the filling in of the templates. Additionally, there was a high focus on analysis and less on synthesis.

4. The quality of the market assessment was low. There was not a standardized process to create market assessments. Additionally, some market assessments were already old and outdated. So, the used financial benchmark was often not trustworthy.
5. There was very limited interaction between the market segments and the business units, other than basic information exchanges. There was no in-depth strategic dialogue or discussion.

### Reflection

The reflection phase consisted of reviews with the leadership team. The market segment and business unit strategies were presented and altered based on requests from the leadership team. Due to lack of time and focus, the business unit strategies were not aligned reviewed with the market segments before presenting to the leadership team.

6. There was not horizontal review before communicating vertically to leadership.

### Impact

The impact phase is about how to use the developed strategy. After the strategy has been developed there are three main actions: Executing strategy, communicating strategy and reflecting or adapting the strategy. Within the strategy process there was limited guidance on how the strategy should be used.

7. Strategy was not always translated into actionable execution plans.
8. Strategy was not always translated into language of the teams and effectively communicated.
9. Strategy was not an active document throughout the year and it was not adapted when conditions changed.

## 7.2.3 Reflection on total process

Besides specific problem areas in the current process, stakeholder interviews revealed several other challenges and opportunities within the strategy process. A concern was the **lack of consistency**, particularly between different phases of the process. The process was still in its infancy, and the expectations changed while working on the process. While the market segment process stuck to the original timeline, the business unit process was given additional weeks, creating a sense of unfair treatment among participants. This was increased by the message that the business units would hold final responsibility since they are responsible for the regional Profit & Loss.

A critical finding was the **importance of bottom-up involvement** in strategy development. Employees highlighted that incorporating insights from various levels of the organization not only increases buy-in but also leads to more practical and actionable strategies. However, collaboration across different departments within the matrix structure does not happen organically, leading to misalignment and inefficiencies. The regional business units often operate as if they are managing eight separate entities, rather than working as part of a cohesive whole. Addressing this mindset challenge will be crucial for the organization's strategic success.

Another key lesson is that **collaboration does not happen organically**. Structured interactions and mechanisms for cross-functional engagement need to be built into the strategy process to ensure alignment. Additionally, the organization runs multiple processes throughout the year, but these are not well linked. Improving integration across these processes could enhance coherence and make it more clear for participants how the strategy process fits into the broader picture.

## 7.3 Conclusions

This chapter has provided an in-depth analysis of the organization's strategy development process by examining stakeholder perspectives and mapping key challenges onto a service blueprint. The findings reveal significant gaps in alignment, collaboration and process execution. This highlights the complexity of managing strategy development across multiple stakeholder groups.

One of the most critical insights is the evolving nature of strategy within the organization. While the transformation aimed to create a more inclusive and transparent strategy process, the approach shifted back towards structured planning by the end of the project. This change highlights the difficulty of maintaining a consistent strategy approach in a dynamic organizational environment. Changes in leadership and organizational priorities influence how strategy is perceived and executed, often resulting in a lack of clarity and alignment across different levels.

The stakeholder analysis identified nine key problem areas in different parts of the strategy development process. Identifying this array of problems brings us closer to refining and optimizing the current bottom-up strategy development process.

## 8 Design focus

The insights gained from participatory experience, literature research and qualitative interviews with stakeholders have shed a new light on the future direction.

The exploration deepened the understanding of the context of strategy in this organization and highlighted the current challenges that stakeholders experienced during last year's strategy development process. In this chapter, a design focus will be defined in order to refine and optimize the current bottom-up strategy development process.

The next step is to translate the insights into actionable solution directions for the development of future concepts. Additionally, a focus area within the process is necessary, this is assessed together with the strategy & transformation team. Finally, a design challenge and design goal are created, which is linked to four overarching themes.

### 8.1 Solution directions

Based on all the findings of the previous chapter, a set of actionable solution directions were then formed by rephrasing the problems into “process should promote” statements.

#### The new process should promote:

- Knowledge sharing and active strategic dialogue between relevant stakeholders (Business Units, Market Segments and Mult plant Units)
- Stakeholders should have horizontal (cross-departmental) reviews before moving to vertical (Leadership Team) communication
- Country based view to support the bottom-up perspective
- Translating the strategy into actionable execution plans
- Translating the strategy into the language of the teams and effectively communicate it

- Keeping the strategy an active document throughout the year and adapting it whenever conditions change
- Active learning as a key objective, to increase long term strategic thinking for the BU directions
- While unlearning old habits of the organization
- Clear timelines and room to immerse in the topics and prepare for the analysis
- Be clear how the process relates to other processes and activities in the organization
- Standardized financial data inputs and high quality standards for market analysis

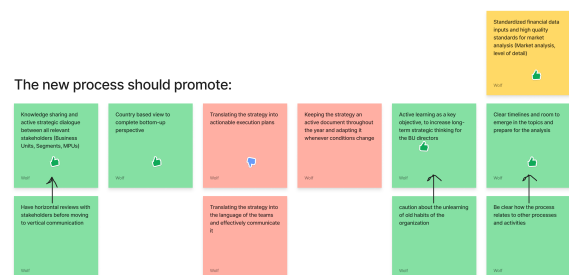


Figure 11: 'Process should promote' statements

### 8.2 Prioritization of problems

When mapping all identified challenges onto the service blueprint, we found multiple areas for potential improvement. However, due to time constraints, it is not feasible to address all of them within this project. Therefore, prioritization was necessary.

To determine which areas to deprioritize, discussions were held with the S&T team using the following criteria:

- Is this problem within the responsibility of the S&T team?
- Are other departments already actively working on solutions?

Based on this assessment, four areas were identified as **low priority**, as seen in Figure 12:

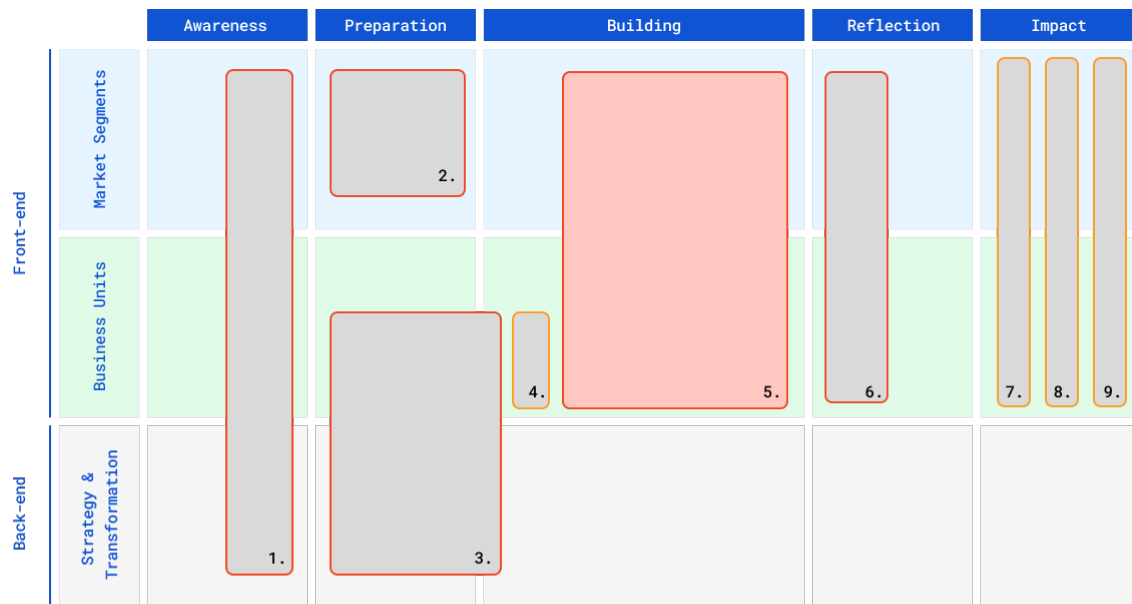


Figure 12: Focus area current service blueprint

### Standardization of data inputs and data quality

This lies beyond the S&T team's scope and is already being addressed by other teams working on data improvement and standardization.

### Three problem areas in the "Impact" phase

These relate to how the strategy output is implemented, which is beyond the S&T team's responsibility. Moreover, different teams are already handling this in their own way.

Given these considerations, these four areas will not be the focus of this project.

The remaining five problem areas were identified as **high priority**. To develop actionable solutions, these challenges were reframed into "**process should promote**" statements, leading to the formation of four key solution directions:

- A. Ignite Collaboration
- B. Learning while unlearning

- C. Set the stage
- D. Support Bottom-up

When mapping these solution directions onto the identified problem areas, one specific area emerged as particularly impactful. This area is highlighted in red in Figure 12.

- 5. Limited strategic dialogue during the 'Building' phase of the process.

Additionally you can see that all 4 solution directions are related to this problem area (A+B+C+D), see Figure 12. By focusing on this problem, improvements across multiple domains can be accomplished. This area of cross-collaboration is crucial to improve the interdepartmental integration. Additionally, solutions developed here could serve as inspiration for addressing the other problem areas in the process.

## 8.3 Design Goal

The problem focus is now defined as:

**“There is not enough communication between the business unit, market segment and multi-plant unit when building the strategy template.”**

In

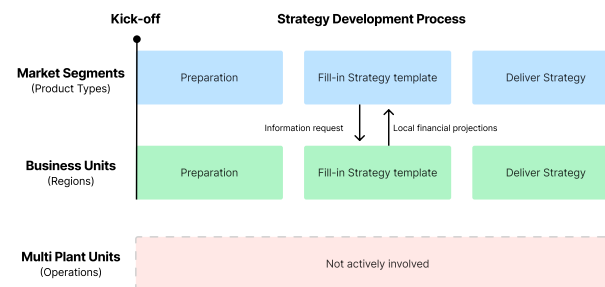


Figure 13, a visual overview is created of the current problem with communication between the departments.

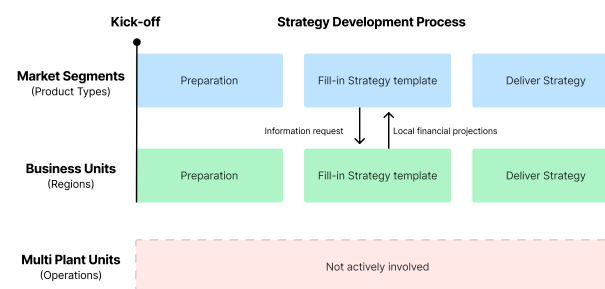


Figure 13: Current strategy development process

Figure 14 shows a zoomed in visualization of the current communication between the stakeholders within the three departments. There is good communication within the departments but no communication between the directors and limited information exchange between the local and global product managers.

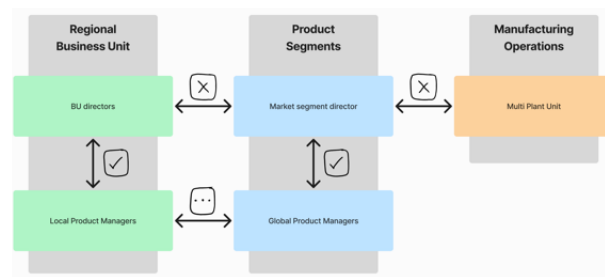


Figure 14: Communication between stakeholders

This has been translated into a Design Goal:

**“Design an experience which promotes strategic dialogue between business units, market segments and the operational team before filling in the strategy template.”**

The new process should promote:

- A.** Ignite collaboration, knowledge sharing through active strategic dialogue between relevant stakeholders
- B.** Growth mindset, be open for active learning while also unlearning old habits
- C.** Set the stage, activate full immersion in strategy topics to be prepared for the process
- D.** Bottom-up support, support regional based strategy development to promote bottom-up perspective

## 9 Ideation

### 9.1 Ideation approach

To generate a diverse range of ideas from multiple perspectives, creative workshops have been conducted. These workshops are designed based on Heijne & Meer (2019) book, *Roadmap for Creative Problem Solving Techniques*, as well as insights from Pasman et al. (2011) on interaction vision workshops.

The first workshop will focus on the problem-finding phase, using an interaction vision to explore key challenges. Together with students, the desired future state will be explored. This results in a set of H2s, that will be further used in the second creative session. The second workshop will center on analogy-based idea generation using Artificial Intelligence, leveraging these H2s to develop potential solutions. Synthetic stakeholders will be used to represent the perspectives of the different departments in the strategy process.

Once all ideas have been generated, they will be clustered into three groups, each representing a different solution space. From these clusters, initial concepts will be created.

Following discussions with the S&T team, the most promising concept from each phase was selected for further development. To refine these concepts, 12 evaluation sessions were conducted, allowing for multiple iteration and improvement steps. In Appendix I, a more detailed explanation of the ideation phase can be found.

### 9.2 Interaction vision

An interaction vision is created that envisions a desired future interaction in the strategy process. This desired future is used as inspiration to create analogies, which in turn, sparks creativity to develop creative solutions to the design challenge (Pasman et al., 2011). This workshop is done with 3 design students.

The interaction vision of “**Catalyzing Shared Wisdom**” was chosen because it aligns closely

with the desired future state of strategic collaboration. The vision was developed using the analogy of a **shipwrecked group on a deserted island**, where survival depends on teamwork, knowledge-sharing and leveraging each individual’s unique skills and qualities. This scenario reflects the essence of effective strategic dialogue. Diverse stakeholders must collaborate, pool their expertise and co-create solutions.

Five How-To’s were identified that will be used during the creative session of H2s using artificial intelligence

1. Design for “open” & “supportive” collaboration
2. Foster “trust-building” interactions
3. Make the process “Engaging” & “empowering”
4. Ensure “Clarity” & “fluidity”
5. Build “rewarding(encouraging)” feedback loops



## 9.3 H2's using Artificial Intelligence

To overcome the challenge of stakeholder unavailability in the ideation workshops, synthetic stakeholders were introduced as AI-generated personas. These synthetic stakeholders were designed to simulate the perspectives, priorities and thought processes of key stakeholders. In Figure 15, the approach for the artificial intelligence ideation can be seen.

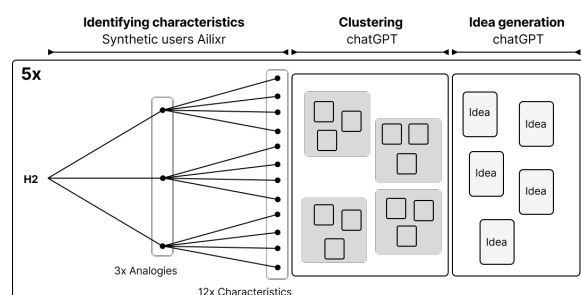


Figure 15: Artificial Intelligence H2 approach

At the conclusion of the AI-driven ideation session, a total of 25 ideas were generated, with five ideas produced for each of the five H2 questions. Each idea maintained a clear connection to the analogies and the clusters of qualities and characteristics identified during the workshop. The use of analogies proved to be a powerful tool, as it stimulated creative thinking and guided the ideas toward innovative directions. This output provided a strong foundation and valuable inspiration for the subsequent phase of concept development.

## 9.4 Clustering Ideas

Clustering the ideas generated during the ideation process revealed three recurring solution spaces that addressed the core issues in the strategy development process.

### Preparing the teams

The first solution space is preparing the teams. It focuses on making sure that all participants are well-informed before attending a strategy session. As defined in the design goal, **Set the stage**, stakeholders from the previous strategy cycle mentioned that a lack of preparation led to

unproductive discussions and inefficient use of time.

### Organizing stakeholders

The second solution space is called organizing stakeholders which focuses on bringing the right people together at the same time. This is closely linked to the **Support Bottom-Up** design goal. Support Bottom-Up emphasizes the importance of involving multiple stakeholders, including regional representatives, to move away from a top-down approach.

### Facilitating session

The third solution space is called facilitating the strategy session. This focuses on ensuring that the time spent together leads to real progress toward a shared strategy. This is closely linked to the **ignite collaboration** and **growth mindset** design goals. The session should encourage active collaboration where stakeholders build on each other's input rather than simply presenting updates.

## 9.5 Concept Selection

For each of the solution spaces, different concepts were developed. The concepts were evaluated during an in-depth discussion with the strategy & transformation team. Based on the organizational context, the best fitting idea per solution space was chosen to develop further. The following rough criteria were used to select the concepts:

- What is the impact of the concept?
- How well does it fit in the current process?
- How feasible is it in the organizational context?

The concepts: **Preparation templates**, **Speed-date** and **Strategy session** were selected. The exact content and flow of the concepts were to be further developed through iterative evaluation sessions with stakeholders.

## 9.6 Iterative sessions

Key internal stakeholders and external experts were individually invited to refine and evaluate the final concepts, see Figure 16. After each session, the concepts were adjusted, resulting in a total of 12 iteration cycles.

Internal users	x5	Internal experts	x4	External experts	x3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• User perspectives</li> <li>• Experience last process</li> <li>• Understand value gained</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize complexities</li> <li>• Specific challenges &amp; opportunities</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outside-in view</li> <li>• Relevant experience</li> <li>• Comparing to other organizations</li> </ul>	

Figure 16: Iteration stakeholders

In Figure 17 an overview of the iteration approach can be seen. Every iteration was a one-on-one session where the 3 steps of the concept were presented step by step. Before revealing the exact content of the concept, the stakeholder was asked about their thoughts on the content.

Over time, the concepts became more concrete with increasing clarity on the exact content and steps involved. The key improvements from these evaluations were:

1. Defining the preparation topics that would best equip teams for productive discussions.
2. Specifying which individuals should participate in the strategy session to ensure the right expertise and perspectives.
3. Narrowing down the session topics to those that would deliver the most value within a 2-hour timeframe.
4. Clarifying the desired outcomes from the strategy session to ensure clear next steps.

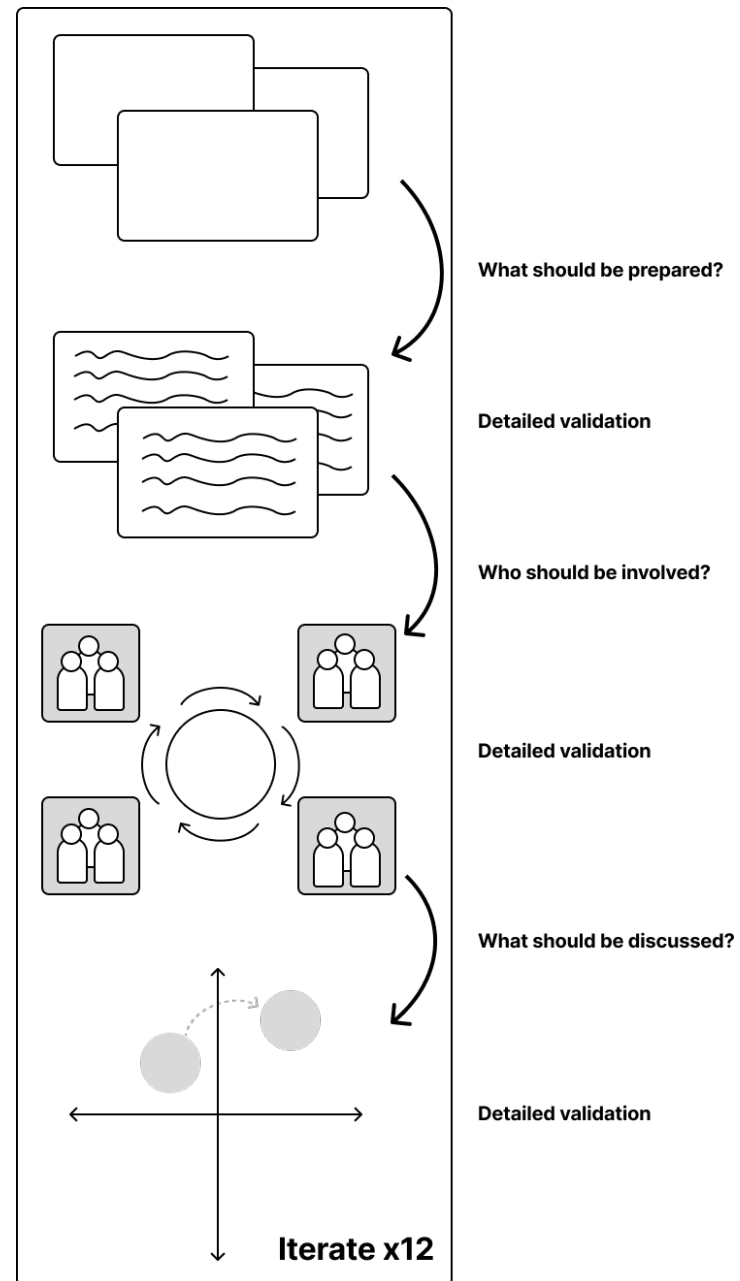


Figure 17: Iteration session approach

## 10 Presenting the concept

This chapter introduces the **strategy re-alignment session** concept, which is designed to improve collaboration and alignment at the start of the strategy cycle. By bringing key stakeholders together in a structured and interactive format, the solution makes sure that strategy development is aligned between the Market Segments, Business Units and Multi Plant Units.

The chapter begins by introducing the concept and explaining its role in strengthening strategic alignment. It then outlines the preparation phase, which helps teams enter discussions with a clear understanding of strategic priorities and external market conditions. Next, it explains how the stakeholders are organized, detailing the involvement of key stakeholders and the facilitation techniques used. Finally, it explores the session discussions, highlighting customer-centricity and competitive positioning as key drivers of alignment. Additionally, there is a simplified competitive positioning discussion approach that is used to gradual implement the new process.

### 10.1 Introducing the concept – strategy re-alignment session

- A. Prepare the teams, to sensitize them for effective discussions
- B. Organize stakeholders, to get the stakeholders together and make effective use of time and resources
- C. Facilitate sessions, to ignite valuable discussions for aligning the teams

This proposed concept introduces an innovative process using strategy re-alignment sessions to increase collaboration and alignment during the initial stages of strategy development. This addition fits well within the current process and enhances stakeholder engagement and alignment. It creates a shared starting point by bringing all relevant stakeholders together in a physical session.

The core of the re-alignment approach is customer centricity. Stakeholders co-create the company's future competitive positioning with a focus on the question: "How can we best serve our customer?" This shared focus builds a common cause mindset and aligns teams on the strategic direction toward the future value proposition.

The process consists of several key steps. First, teams individually prepare by assessing the company's strategic direction and conducting

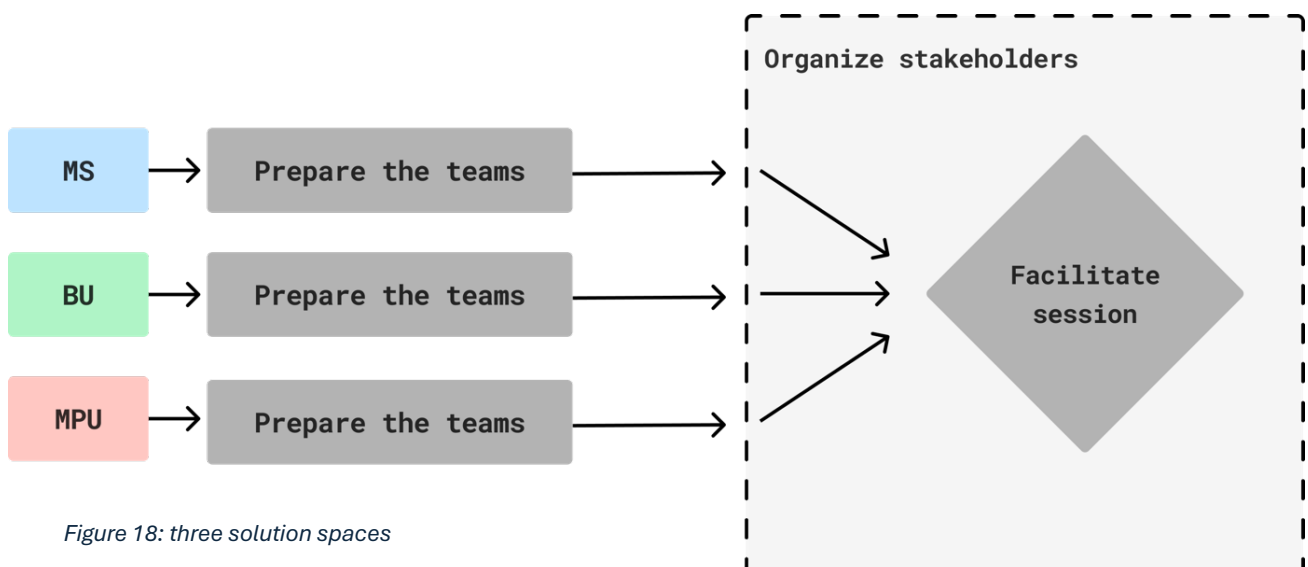


Figure 18: three solution spaces

internal and external analyses. This preparation builds a shared understanding and clarifies the strategic guidelines and boundaries.

Next, two physical re-alignment days are organized. One for the first half of the regions and another for the second half. This allows all relevant stakeholders to engage in face-to-face discussions. These sessions also create opportunities to build trust and encourage informal cross-pollination between planned discussions. This makes it easier for participants to connect throughout the remainder of the strategy development process.

During the strategy sessions, teams collaboratively define their future competitive positioning. Resulting in a set of Must Win Battles for each department. These Must Win Battles outline the key priorities per department that will strengthen the value proposition.

After the sessions, teams leave with an aligned view of the company's future value proposition and a clear understanding of how each department contributes to achieving the strategic direction. Everyone understands the shared value of the participants, lowering the threshold to reach out and collaborate.

By fostering collaboration and strategic dialogue between business units, market segments and multi-plant units, the concept addresses the four design goals: **Set the Stage, Ignite Collaboration, Growth Mindset** and **Bottom-Up Support**. Through a structured process, teams are well-prepared with clear leadership guidelines which sets the stage for effective discussions. Collaboration is ignited by bringing stakeholders together in physical sessions, building trust and encouraging cross-functional dialogue. A customer-centric approach shifts the mindset toward a common cause, fostering openness to learning and unlearning. Finally, involving both regional and global actors promotes bottom-up support by ensuring that regional perspectives are included in shaping the strategy.

## 10.2 Preparing the teams

A template is given with topics for each of the departments to prepare. An overarching strategic direction is given from leadership which guides the teams in the strategy development.

### 10.2.1 Strategy direction and guidelines

In uncertain market conditions and during ongoing organizational transformations, uncertainty can delay decision-making and fragment efforts. This is when leadership needs to be especially clear. Beyond financial targets and goals, leadership must also communicate the brand image the company aims to portray and the competitive position it seeks to hold. Additionally, the appetite for investment and CAPEX, along with guidelines for focus, must be defined so departments understand the scope within which they can operate.

The role of leadership is to set a clear course by establishing a strong framework that enables confident and aligned decision-making across the organization. A concise and clear guide that defines the company's strategic direction and key guidelines for the upcoming period is crucial.

The leadership message will serve as the foundation at the start of the strategy process. It should be delivered by the CEO or vice president of Strategy & Transformation in a dedicated meeting with Market Segment Directors, Business Unit Directors and Multi-Plant Unit leaders. Offering a short Q&A can help to give clarity on the leadership guidelines. Additionally, a visual representation of the strategy will be provided to ensure all stakeholders can refer to a clear and consistent point of guidance throughout the process.

## 10.2.2 Preparation template

Teams need to be well-prepared before entering strategic discussions to make the best use of their time and resources. These discussions are key moments where teams align their goals, make important decisions, and set the direction for the organization's future. To get the most out of these sessions, teams should complete background work within their own departments, ensuring that the time together is spent making decisions rather than sharing basic information.

The goal is not to increase the workload for teams but to redistribute it more effectively. The preparation phase replaces work that would typically occur later in the strategy process. By moving the analysis to the start of the process, teams are prepared for the alignment session. The aligned teams can move to the synthesis phase together. Elements of the preparation template will be drawn from the strategy template used in the previous year to ensure continuity and familiarity.

Before looking ahead, teams must first evaluate their current position. A gap analysis helps teams compare the goals and direction set in the previous year's strategic plan with the actual results achieved. This process helps identify both successes and areas where performance fell short.

### Preparation topics

Making informed strategic choices requires a thorough understanding of the external environment to ensure decisions are based on facts rather than assumptions. Established strategy tools can support this external analysis. Figure 19 provides an overview of the preparation topics assigned to each department. The Market Segment and Business Unit conduct similar preparation tasks. However, the Business Unit focuses on the local context, while the Market Segment takes a global perspective. The Multi Plant Unit focuses on analyzing future material costs, potential sourcing challenges or opportunities, and regulatory developments affecting manufacturing and operations.

MS	BU	MPU
Gap analysis	Gap analysis	Gap analysis
Market research	Local Market research	Material costs
Trends	Local Trends	Sourcing
Competitor analysis	Local Competitor analysis	Regulations
Regulations	Local Regulations	
Customer needs	Customer needs	

Figure 19: Preparation topics

### Gap Analysis

Last years strategic plan compared to the actual performance.

1. Strategic objectives and Must Win Battles, what was the expected outcome, what is the actual outcome, what is the gap?
2. Financial Gap analysis
  - a. Overall Revenue and EBITDA performance per BU
  - b. Baseline Business per Segment
  - c. Growth Business per Segment
3. Root cause analysis
4. Reflection

Reflecting on these outcomes allows teams to better understand what worked and what did not. Combining this analysis with an exploration of the root causes behind any gaps helps teams uncover the reasons for their performance. This gives them a solid foundation for making more effective strategic decisions in the future.

### DESTEP trend analysis

The DESTEP trend analysis tool is introduced to get an understanding of market trends. Since this is a well-known tool that employees might recognize, it makes it easier to integrate into the strategy cycle. The analysis looks at key external factors shaping the market, including demographic, economic, social, technological, ecological and political trends.



Figure 20: DESTEP analysis

### SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis is used to provide a clear overview of the organization's internal and external environment. Many people are already familiar with this tool, making it easy to apply. The analysis helps identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This gives a structured view of key factors affecting the organization.

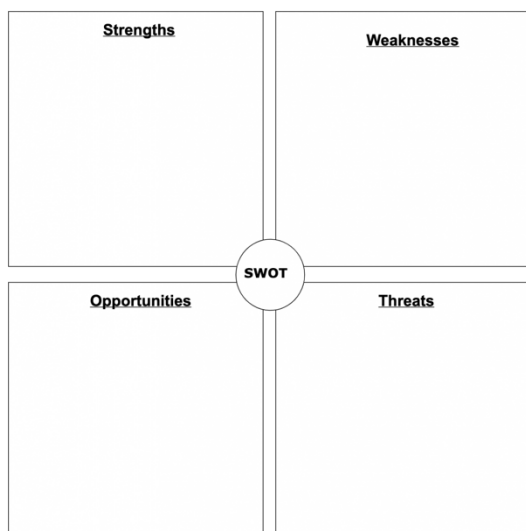


Figure 21: SWOT analysis

### Market analysis

The existing Excel and PowerPoint templates from last year's process are used to conduct the market analysis, see Confidential Appendix. This includes assessing market size, growth and customer segments based on forecasting data. Teams will fill in the required data to ensure a structured and centralized approach. While some teams are working on standardizing this process, this strategy process follows the current method until the new approach is ready. This

keeps the process consistent and ensures alignment across teams.

### Competitor analysis

The existing template from the previous strategy cycle are used to keep the process consistent, see Confidential Appendix. The competitor analysis looks at market share, key players and their strengths and weaknesses. It identifies the top 4 competitors per market segment and business unit. Keeping the same structure makes it easier to compare past and current market trends and track changes over time.

### Customer Needs Map

The Market Segment and Business Unit teams prepare customer needs maps, which serve as the foundation for the workshop activities. These maps are created based on market and competitor insights, discussions with customers and input from local sales representatives. The goal is to identify the key customer needs that influence purchasing decisions. This analysis is conducted for each region (BU) and for each Sub-segment.

The outcome is a matrix that evaluates each identified customer need using three criteria, rated on a scale from 1 to 4:

1. Needs of the customer segment: How important is this need for the specific customer segment in the region?
2. Company performance: How well does the company currently meet this need?
3. Top competitor performance: How well does the top competitor address this need?

An example of this matrix is shown in Figure 22.

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	

Explanation of scores:

1 = Low

2 = Medium

3 = High

4 = Very high

Figure 22: Customer Needs map

To maximize the effectiveness of the workshop, teams gather these insights in advance and share their findings 2 weeks before the session. This ensures that all participants enter the discussion with a common understanding. The goal is not to arrive with fixed conclusions but to bring relevant input that supports an open and collaborative discussion. External analysis informs the teams, while the corporate strategic direction remains the guiding framework to maintain focus and consistency.

Teams are reminded to “Bring ingredients, not cakes!”.



## 10.3 Organizing the teams

### 10.3.1 Speed-date

To make effective strategic decisions, strong alignment between Business Units, Multi Plant Units, and Market Segments is essential. With multiple regions and physical limitations, the Strategy re-alignment session is designed to structure discussions efficiently while ensuring valuable face-to-face engagement.

The stakeholders that will be involved in the re-alignment session are:

- Business Unit: Director + Finance Director
- Market Segment: Director
- Multi Plant Unit: Director
- Facilitator (internal from Strategy & Transformation team or external)

Each Business Unit and Multi Plant Unit form a group based on their region. Market Segments rotate between these regional groups throughout the day. Every Market Segment meets with each BU/MPU group in a dedicated two-hour session, see Figure 23. By the end of the day, all Market Segments will have had structured, focused discussions with every BU/MPU, ensuring alignment on key priorities and the region's future competitive position.

This format fosters trust and collaboration by enabling direct, in-person discussions between department directors. In addition to the structured sessions, informal moments during lunch, coffee breaks, and dinner provide space for open exchanges. These informal interactions help strengthen relationships and encourage cross-pollination of ideas across departments.

The Strategy Re-alignment Session ensures time is used effectively, combining structured alignment with relationship-building. By the end of the day, every team will have held targeted discussions with all relevant stakeholders and built a stronger foundation for continued collaboration and strategy development.

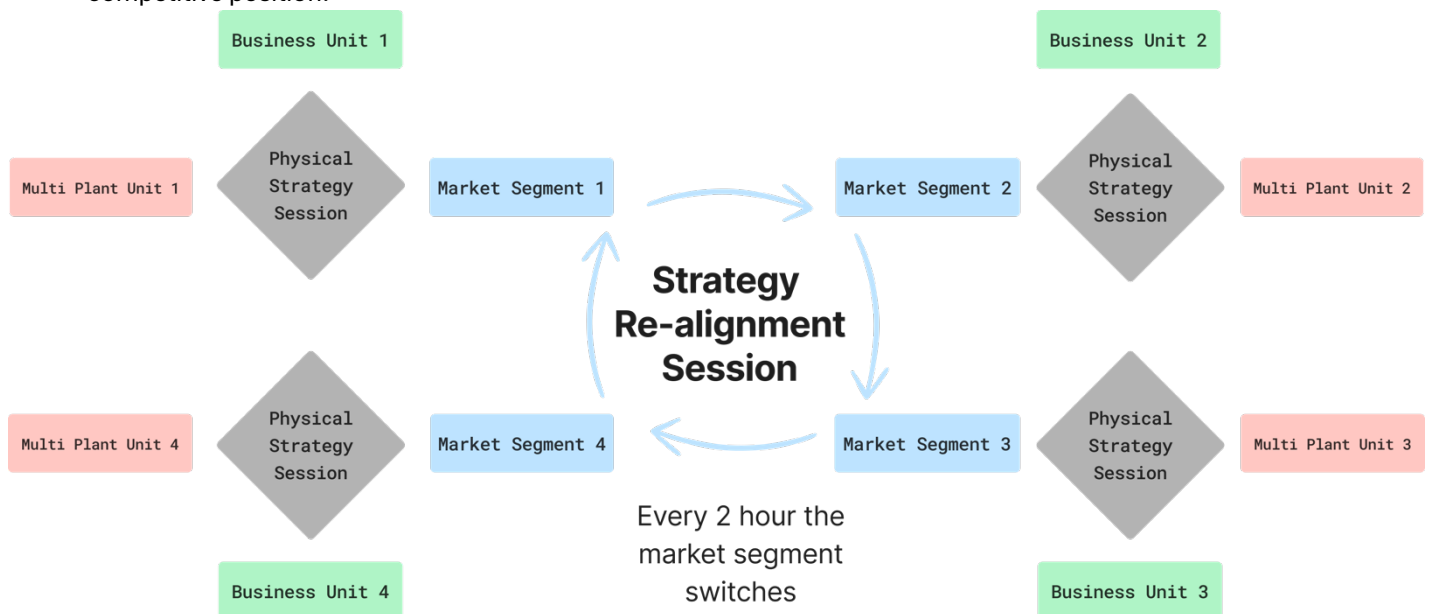


Figure 23: Strategy Re-alignment Session

## 10.4 Strategy session discussion

### 10.4.1 Customer centricity

As discovered in chapter 6.3, to build collaboration it is crucial to have a common cause and mutual understanding. To create this, customer centricity is introduced. Customer centricity can bring teams together by shifting the focus away from individual priorities and toward a shared goal: “How can we best serve our customer?”. When everyone shares the goal of serving the customer, teams naturally start pulling in the same direction and combine their strengths to solve problems together.

Currently, when departments interact, each group often pushes its own plans and competes for budget and attention, see Figure 24. This makes it harder to see the bigger picture and limits the potential for teams to collaborate. A customer-focused approach helps cut through these silos. It encourages people to step out of their own fixed mindset and come together to create solutions that deliver value for the bigger picture.



Figure 24: Competing for budget

At the core of this concept is a culture where people are open to learning from each other, asking questions and trying new things. As seen in Figure 25, the customer is central in collaboration. When teams work toward shared goals that are driven by what customers need, collaboration becomes more meaningful.

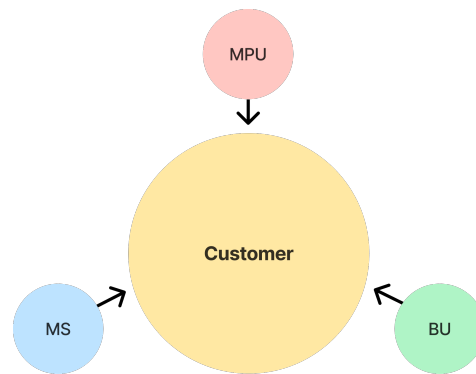


Figure 25: Customer Centric Collaboration

### 10.4.2 Competitive advantage session

Creating common ground and alignment before shaping strategies is crucial for success. The competitive advantage session is designed to bring teams together to develop a shared understanding of the competitive positioning based on customer needs. With limited time and resources, the discussions need to be focused on what truly requires collaboration by avoiding topics that can be handled individually.

The focus will be on one or two of the most relevant market sub-segments, asking ourselves: How can we best serve our customers while gaining a competitive advantage? Instead of presenting pre-made strategies, everyone will co-create and work together to map competition and customer needs to identify future positioning opportunities. The goal is to put the customer at the center, moving away from individual focus areas to develop a shared perspective.

To ensure effective discussions, facilitators will guide the structured session.

#### Schedule

The schedule for the day is fully packed, but there is enough time reserved for breaks. There is a plenary session to start with, 4 strategy sessions, lunch and dinner. Lunch and dinner are specifically organized to improve the cross-pollination potential and build trust, see Figure 26.

		BU& MPU 1	BU& MPU 2	BU& MPU 3	BU& MPU 4
8:30-9:00	Plenary				
9:00-10:50	Round 1	MS 1	MS 4	MS 3	MS 2
10:50-11:00	Break				
11:00-12:50	Round 2	MS 2	MS 1	MS 4	MS 3
12:50-13:00	Walk				
13:00-14:00	Lunch				
14:00-16:00	Round 3	MS 3	MS 2	MS 1	MS 4
15:50-16:00	Break				
16:00-18:00	Round 4	MS 4	MS 3	MS 2	MS 1
19:00-22:00	Dinner				

Figure 26: Day Schedule

### Facilitation preparation

It is crucial to have 4 facilitators that can guide the groups during the day. Since all participants are relatively senior at a Director level, it is crucial to have senior facilitators that are able to take lead and interrupt discussions if they divert too much.

The main objectives of the facilitator are:

- Planning, managing and guiding the session
- Making sure the session feels fluent and seamless by avoiding teamwork pitfalls
- Resolving conflict by mediating and highlighting different viewpoints
- Making sure the teams do not have to focus on the process

### Plenary opening

The day will begin with a 30-minute plenary session to set the context and establish the focus for the workshop. This opening presentation will emphasize the importance of adopting an outside-in perspective, placing the customer at the center of all strategic discussions.

Participants will be encouraged to step away from their daily routines and adopt a growth mindset focused on alignment and future growth. The facilitators will be introduced as guides rather than experts. Their role is to create an environment where innovative ideas can emerge and thrive.

The objectives and mindset for the day will be specified: the goal is to achieve alignment on our shared competitive positioning, both in the present and for the future, by gaining a deeper understanding of our customers and their evolving needs.

To break the ice and activate this customer-centric mindset, the meeting will start with a brief exercise: What word comes to mind when you think of our customers? This will set the tone for the collaborative work ahead.

### Session start

There are four, 2-hour sessions in total. The schedule for every session is as follows, see Figure 27:

2 hours	Total
15 min	Review Customer Needs
45 min	Identify Competitive Gap
30 min	Future Positioning
20 min	Must-Win Battles per department
10 min	Rotate and small break

Figure 27: Session timetable

### 1. Review Customer Needs

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		MS	BU					x
	Company performance			x				x	
	Top competitor performance				x			x	
Competitiveness (Price)	Needs of Customer segment			x			x		
	Company performance		BU	MS			BU	MS	
	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		
	Company performance			BU	MS			BU	MS
	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			BU	MS
	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	

Figure 28: Customer Needs review

As seen in Figure 28, the differences between the local and global perspective are shown.

Discussions are held about the differences in perspectives, together the departments try to come to an understanding. A conclusion could also be that additional customer insights are necessary to better understand the customer perspective.

Initiatives to engage in deeper customer research are placed in the 'parking lot'. These can be picked up by the teams later on.

## 2. Identify Competitive Gaps

Areas that have potential to improve competitive position are identified together. All 3 departments think about how to better solve the customer needs and improve the competitive positioning. Selective focus areas are agreed upon together, see Figure 29.

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	

Figure 29: Identify Competitive Gaps

## 3. Future Positioning

Together customer need improvements are identified, as seen in Figure 30. Focusing on these elements will be crucial to better serve the customers. It is important to agree on the value it brings to improve on these customer needs. This creates a clear common goal to work towards a better value proposition.

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	

Figure 30: Future Positioning

## 4. Strategic focus per department

After analyzing and identifying the improvement areas, everyone will look at how their department can support the improvements of these customer needs. Strategic focus will be written down which define the focus for the next strategic period (3 years) to support the future positioning.

See Figure 31 for an example.

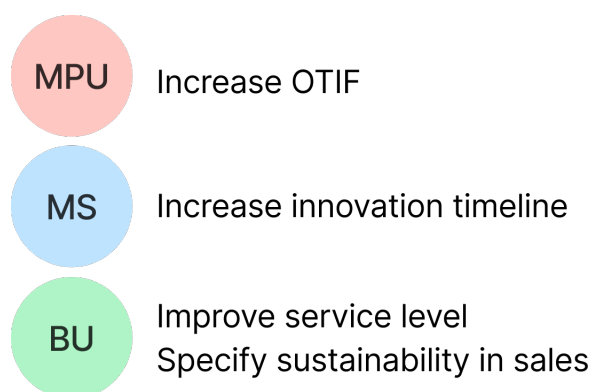


Figure 31: Example strategic focus per department

## Outcome

At the end of the sessions, every business unit and multi plant unit group have talked to all 4 of the market segment directors. Together they have identified the future competitive positioning and specified how each department's strategic focus contribute to the improvement of the value proposition. This future positioning, together with the strategic focus, are the starting point for

the strategy templates. After returning to their teams, each department can start filling in the strategy template for the next strategic period.

### Informal activities

Besides the formal activities, two informal gatherings are planned: lunch and dinner. These moments will create opportunities for cross-pollination, building trust and relationships among participants. Creating these connections will help lower the threshold for reaching out to one another when new challenges or opportunities arise in the future.

## 10.4.3 Simplified competitive positioning

This chapter introduces an alternative approach to the strategy session discussion. The simplified competitive positioning session serves as an initial step to gradually prepare teams for the full customer-centric session described in Chapter 10.4.2. Instead of needing extensive customer research, this approach focuses on aligning departments around how to strengthen their competitive advantage in different market sub-segments.

During a two-hour face-to-face session, participants discuss key priorities and identify how each department can improve its value proposition over the next five years. By keeping the discussion structured and avoiding overwhelming complexity, teams can develop their collaboration skills and data-gathering

capabilities before transitioning to a more detailed customer-centric approach in the future.

### Approach

This session uses a single template to guide discussion among the three core departments. The template highlights three or four sub-segments in each market segment. For each sub-segment, participants explore how to better meet the needs of downstream and upstream customers. Instead of investing time in deep customer research, they rely on internal analysis and broader market context. By the end of the meeting, each department agree on specific initiatives that become the basis for detailed Market Segment and Business Unit strategies.

This detailed view of the template can be seen in Figure 32.

### Outcome

After this simplified session, the teams will end up with a defined focus for each of the sub-segments regarding upstream or downstream customer types. Additionally, each of the departments will have defined areas that they will focus on over the next 5 years. This will result in a base alignment before the teams start building the strategy. During the strategy creation these defined focus areas will function as the baseline direction.

## Simple competitive positioning

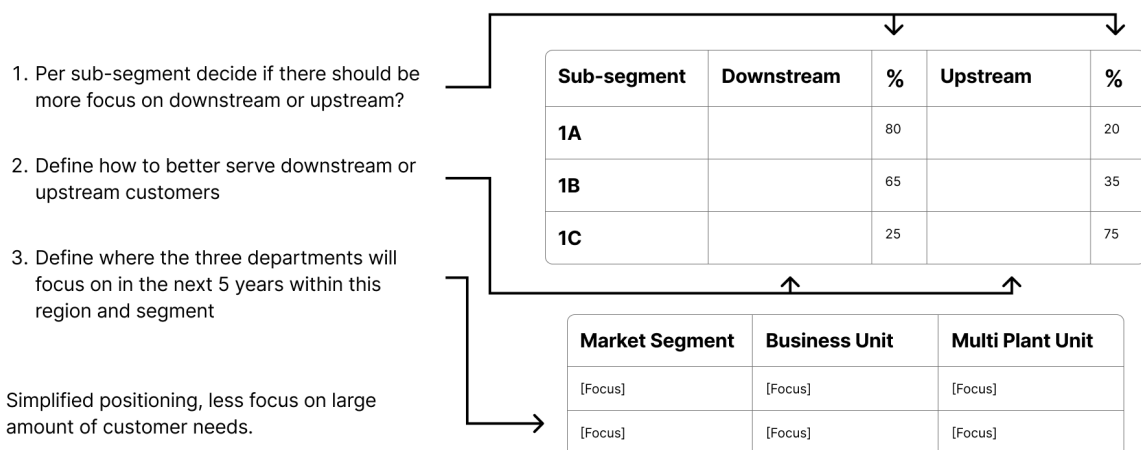


Figure 32: Simplified competitive positioning template

## 10.5 Impact of the proposed process

First of all, this new approach includes the Multi Plant Unit in the strategy discussions. Since all three departments are highly interdependent from each other, it is crucial to align before building a strategy. Through this inclusive session, a mutual understanding, shared vision and common goals are established.

The Strategy re-alignment session is a steppingstone for building a culture of collaboration through:

- Adding an interaction point where everyone comes together for formal and informal activities
- Co-creating a shared vision and common goals, resulting in a mutual understanding
- Shifting the mindset towards a common cause using the power of customer centricity

Additionally, it helps to build relationships and trust among employees, lowering the threshold for future collaboration.

By aligning at the start of the process, a shared understanding is build, which makes it easier to connect to each other when a challenge or opportunity arises. It also creates shared ownership about the strategic direction.

See Figure 33 for an overview of the current process.

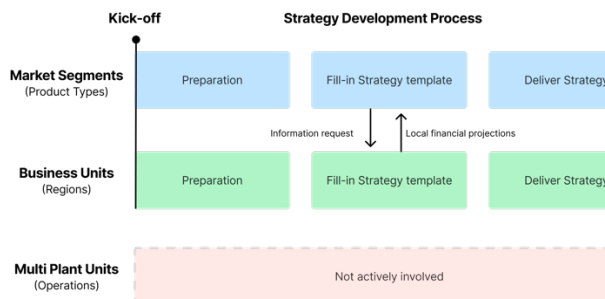


Figure 33: Current Strategy Development Process

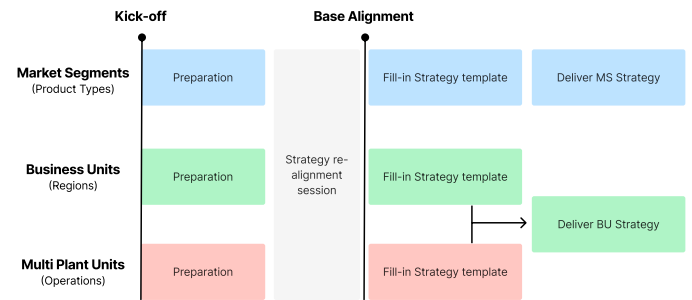


Figure 34 shows a view of the process after implementing the Strategy re-alignment sessions.

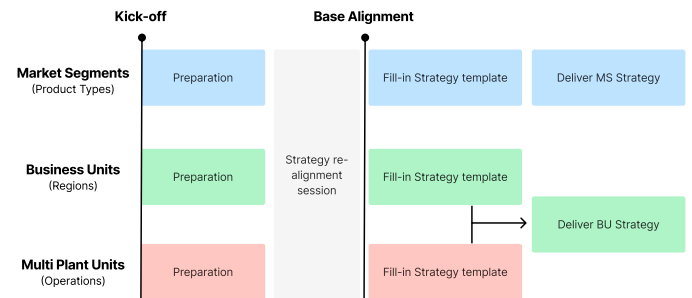


Figure 34: Future strategy development process

# 11 Execution strategy

## 11.1 Future service blueprint

In the Confidential Appendix, a full view of the future service blueprint can be found. It shows a complete view of the process, from start to finish. Including the users (Market Segment, Business Unit and Multi Plant Unit), Front-stage stakeholders (Strategy & Transformation team and Leadership Team) and the back-stage support (Strategy & Transformation team). Additionally, it shows where the data is gathered for each step and which deliverables are handed in. At the bottom there is also a visualization of the different solution elements and how they fit in the process.

In Figure 35, a zoomed-in view provides a detailed breakdown of the solution process. The flow of user activities is clearly mapped, illustrating how participants initiate their preparation, gather relevant data and engage in the strategy re-alignment session. On the left, it highlights the key preparation elements central to the solution:

- **Leadership Guidelines**
- **Business Context**
- **Relevance for Customers**
- **Company Strengths**
- **Competitor Strengths**

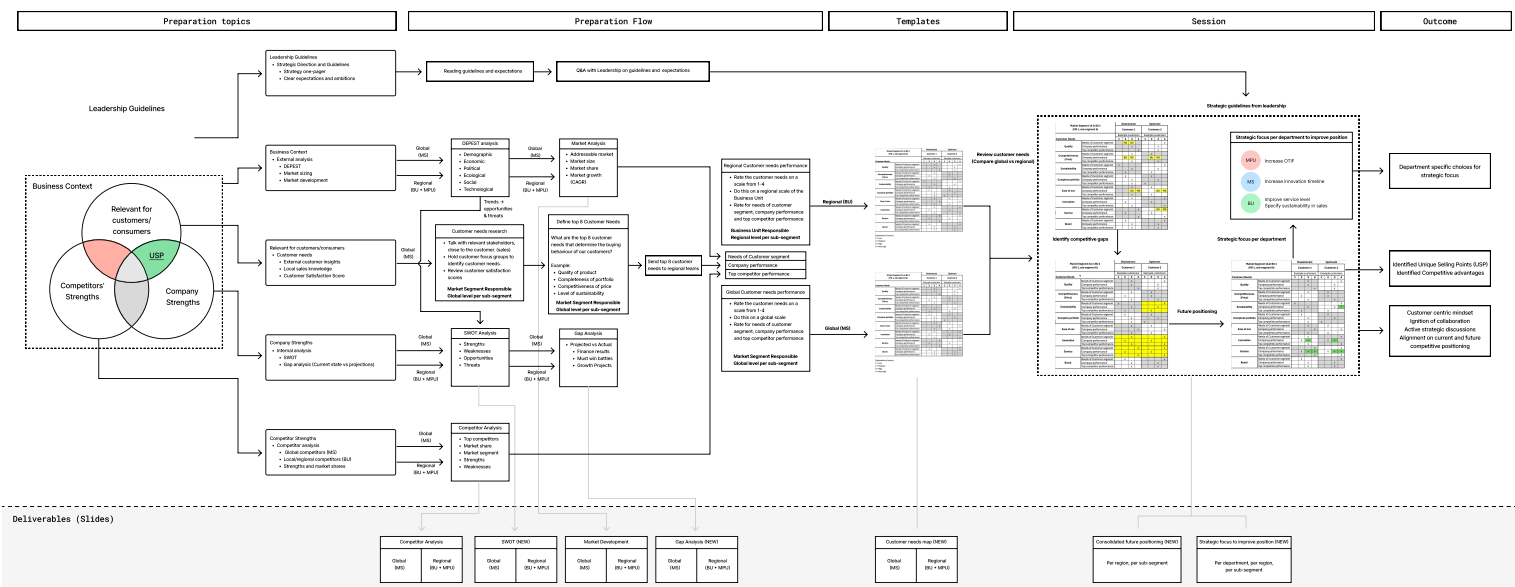


Figure 35: Detailed breakdown of solution process

Each of these elements is linked to a specific type of analysis designed to extract the necessary insights. The arrows in the diagram illustrate how these insights feed into the strategy re-alignment session. At the bottom, the deliverables for each activity are outlined, showing the tangible outcomes of the process.



## 11.2 Implementation roadmap

In this chapter advice will be given for the step-by-step implementation of the strategy re-alignment sessions. Throughout three horizons the customer-centric thinking is gradually implemented into the strategy development process. See Figure 36 for the solution elements that are relevant in the three horizons. Each step is meant to test the approach in a focused setting, after which they can be upscaled for broader integration within the organization. The **first horizon** will begin with a simplified competitive positioning discussion, the main goal here is to realign the teams with minimal complexity and need for customer specific preparation. The **second horizon** takes a more thorough and customer-centric approach, specifically focusing on customer needs in a country deep-dive session. This introduces the organization to using customer needs to become a more customer centric driven organization in

strategy formulation. The **third horizon** aims to roll out the customer centric approach to the whole organization during the strategy development process. This final horizon will see the organizations overarching strategy process shaped around customer needs and cross-departmental alignment.

### Strategic Roadmap

	Horizon 1 Simplified Competitive positioning	Horizon 2 Customer-centric country deepdive	Horizon 3 Customer-centric Competitive positioning
Prepare the teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership guidelines</li> <li>• Business context</li> <li>• Internal analysis</li> <li>• Competitor analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership guidelines</li> <li>• Business context</li> <li>• Internal analysis</li> <li>• Competitor analysis</li> <li>• Customer analysis</li> <li>• Customer needs map</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership guidelines</li> <li>• Business context</li> <li>• Internal analysis</li> <li>• Competitor analysis</li> <li>• Customer analysis</li> <li>• Customer needs map</li> </ul>
Organizing stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rotating Market Segments</li> <li>• Full strategy days with               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market Segments</li> <li>• Business Units</li> <li>• Multi Plant Units</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country deepdive               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Market Segments</li> <li>• Local Business Unit</li> <li>• Country director</li> <li>• Local Multi Plant Unit</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rotating Market Segments</li> <li>• Full strategy days with               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market Segments</li> <li>• Business Units</li> <li>• Multi Plant Units</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Strategy session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simplified competitive positioning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer-centric strategy re-alignment session</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer-centric strategy re-alignment session</li> </ul>
Time	In 2 years	Whenever a country deepdive is necessary	In 5 years

Figure 36: Strategic roadmap

### 11.2.1 Horizon 1 – Simplified competitive positioning

In this horizon the organization introduces a simplified approach to competitive positioning. This will lay the groundwork for deeper customer-centricity in future steps.

#### Context

The organization has not worked with explicit customer needs in its strategy development before. This makes a fully customer-centric approach feel risky and too big of a step at this stage. Stakeholders worry about the complexity of gathering new data and whether those insights can directly influence decision-making. They want to introduce changes gradually to test and refine a new methodology.

Cross-departmental collaboration remains a major challenge. In the previous strategy cycle, participants often focused on their own departmental concerns rather than broader organizational objectives. This first horizon addresses those challenges by starting small and aligning senior leaders around the fundamentals of competitive positioning. By keeping the changes manageable, they aim to maintain consistency with the prior strategy development process while also setting the stage for a future that is more oriented toward customer centricity.

#### Solution elements

Leadership sets the stage by supplying the teams with guidelines around the strategic direction and expectations. During the preparation the teams analyze the business context, do an internal and competitor analysis.

A series of rotating alignment sessions is done during a strategy day. During 2 strategy days, half of the regions are present on the first day and the other half of the region is active on the second day. At the end of the sessions, all Market Segment Directors, Business Unit Directors and Finance Directors and Multi plant Unit Directors have had a 2-hour strategy re-alignment session.

The session is focused around a simplified competitive positioning session. Rather than

deeply diving into customer needs and insights, the stakeholders use the prepared analysis and guidelines to discuss the overall positioning in the market. They draw conclusions about how the business can improve its competitive position in each market sub-segment and customer type.

#### Tips for success

This will be the first time that the departments will experience a rotating strategy session with these cross-functional stakeholders. All participants that are present have a senior role in their department and will potentially try to get the best result for their individual department.

- In order to make the session run smoothly, senior facilitators are necessary to keep the session controlled. They need to be senior enough so the other senior participants are willing to listen.
- It will be crucial to emphasize the need to think beyond the departmental boundaries and instead think of the direction that is best for the overall organization.
- At the start of the session, the outside-in focus should be emphasized to make sure that they keep the mindset of thinking about the bigger picture.
- Maintaining a clear schedule and an agenda that respects everyone's time helps reduce friction. Topics that arise during discussions can be placed on the parking lot to come back to later.
- Already encourage participants to think of the value that is delivered to the customer, so that the shift toward deeper customer-centricity in the next horizons feels both natural and achievable.

## 11.2.2 Horizon 2 – Customer-centric country deepdive

Building on the foundation laid in Horizon 1, this second horizon introduces a more customer-centric approach by focusing on a single country that requires deeper attention.

### Context

A country deepdive is often necessary when a market is underperforming or when external forces completely change the competitive environment. In some cases, leadership or manufacturing changes may also require a re-evaluation of how a country fits within the organization's strategy.

By focusing on one country, teams have a chance to investigate specific customer needs more closely. They can conduct focus groups, gather local sales insights and closely examine the customer's perspective on product or service offerings. This setting is ideal for testing how effectively the organization can gather and analyze data before implementing the approach in the full strategy development process. Through this deepdive, participants develop a more nuanced view of what customers in a given country expect. This creates a valuable opportunity to test the customer-centric competitive positioning session.

### Solution elements

Initially the preparation stays similar to horizon 1. Including leadership guidelines, Business Context, Internal and competitor analysis. Additionally in horizon 2, a customer analysis is done which results in a customer needs map for the specific country. This creates an overview of how important the customer needs are for each customer segment, how well the organization performs and what the competitor scores on each customer need.

A country deepdive session is organized, together with the Business Unit Director, Finance Director and country manager. Additionally, the Multi Plant Unit Director and all Market Segment Directors join. This ensures a broad perspective

on the different stakeholders that are active within the country.

There is a customer-centric strategy re-alignment session. Participants talk through the customer needs map and any findings from local research. They assess how well the current country strategy aligns with the customer needs and identify gaps that must be filled to strengthen the organization's competitive positioning. The discussion focuses on possible improvements related to the Business Unit, Multi Plant Unit and Market Segment teams to better serve customer needs.

### Tips for success

- Since this is the first time the organization is integrating customer needs into the strategy process, it is essential to document how those needs are gathered. This creates a foundation of knowledge that can be used for future deepdives and for the transition to Horizon 3.
- Setup customer data gathering initiatives to continuously be informed on customer needs
- Teams will also benefit from clear guidance on using customer needs maps so they understand how to interpret and apply them effectively.
- It is important to focus discussions on the larger picture of customer needs. Instead of focusing on every detail during the session.
- Keeping leadership visible throughout the deepdive shows the importance of customer-centric thinking.
- Using facilitators helps maintain a concrete and focused session that drives meaningful outcomes.

### 11.2.3 Horizon 3 – Full customer centric competitive positioning

Building on Horizons 1 and 2, Horizon 3 fully integrates customer-centric strategy into the organization. With teams experienced in gathering insights and leadership embracing cross-departmental collaboration. In this Horizon the customer-centric strategy re-alignment session is implemented at scale making sure strategic decisions align with customer needs and market positioning.

#### Context

Having practiced a simplified competitive positioning session in Horizon 1 and a customer-centric deepdive in Horizon 2, the organization is now ready to combine both approaches into one complete bottom-up strategy development process. This Horizon will be implemented in 5 years, teams are more familiar with gathering customer insights and using the customer needs map. Leadership and senior stakeholders have experienced rotating alignment sessions and understand the value of involving multiple departments and perspectives. As a result, a fully integrated, customer-centric re-alignment session can be implemented across the entire organization.

#### Solution elements

In Horizon 3, the rotating strategy sessions from Horizon 1 are merged with the in-depth, customer-focused approach from Horizon 2. Leadership again provides guidelines and frames the business context, supported by internal and competitor analyses. Additionally, each region and department is equipped to gather rich customer insights and update the customer needs map before the session. This thorough preparation leads into a customer-centric strategy re-alignment session, where representatives from Market Segment, Business Unit and Multi Plant Unit discuss how to best position the organization in each market sub-segment. They can now rely on more complete customer data and already have a shared history of collaboration to guide these discussions.

#### Tips for success

- Make sure strong facilitation keeps discussions focused on overall company goals rather than individual department priorities.
- Recognize and celebrate the shift toward a customer-centric mindset to keep teams motivated and engaged.
- Keep leadership actively involved to highlight the importance of customer insights and track lessons learned for ongoing improvement.
- Reinforce how this approach strengthens the company's market position and build confidence in its long-term impact.

### 11.2.4 Conclusion

The Implementation Strategy outlines a structured approach to gradually integrating customer-centric thinking into the organization's strategy development process. Through three horizons, the organization transitions from a simplified competitive positioning discussion to a fully customer-centric strategy re-alignment process. Each phase is designed to test, refine and scale the approach, ensuring teams adapt effectively. **Horizon 1** establishes foundational alignment with minimal complexity, **Horizon 2** deepens customer understanding through a focused country deep dive and **Horizon 3** integrates customer needs and cross-departmental collaboration into the full strategy cycle. By following this phased approach, the organization can build a sustainable, structured and customer-driven strategy process while maintaining alignment between regional business units and global priorities.

## 12 Design evaluation

This chapter evaluates how effectively the new design aligns with the goals and objectives that were identified during the discovery and define phases. Four design goals emerged early on from stakeholder interviews that shed light on key pain points and expectations following last year's strategy process. These goals guided every step of the redesign to better meet the needs of both process users and owners. Chapter 12.1 evaluates if and how these goals have been achieved. Chapter 12.2 explores the innovation sweet spot by analyzing the solution's desirability, feasibility and viability.

### 12.1 Evaluate design goals

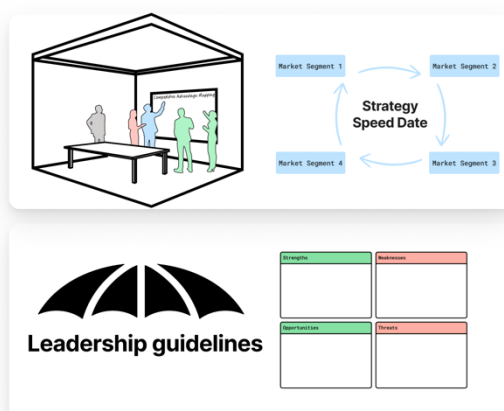
In Chapter 8, a design focus was defined along with 4 design goals that would guide the creation of the solution. These four design goals were crucial in solving the design challenge. As seen in Figure 37, the 4 design goals are analyzed to see which elements of the solution work towards solving each goal.

#### Ignite collaboration

Igniting collaboration is crucial as a steppingstone for future effectiveness of teams. The initial interaction moment sets the stage for building trust and relationships in collaborating.

#### Ignite collaboration

Add a moment of interaction where teams are together



#### Set the stage

Clear leadership guidance to create mutual understanding

Through setting up a re-alignment session with all relevant stakeholders, collaboration is ignited.

#### Growth mindset

Being open to learn and listen to relevant stakeholders is important to grow as a team and innovate. By establishing a customer-centric mindset through putting the customer in the middle and working with customer needs in the discussions. Stakeholders have an outside-in view that caters to the growth mindset of being open to learn.

#### Set the stage

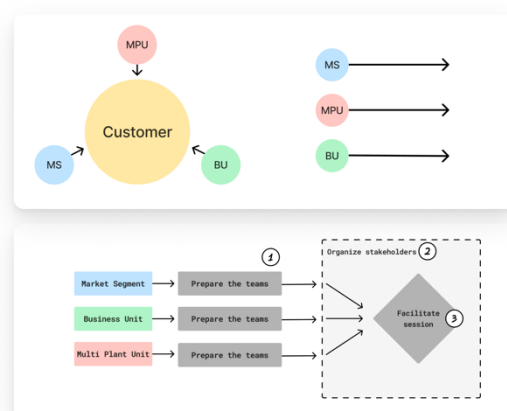
The clear leadership guidelines give the boundaries for the teams to work towards the corporate strategic direction. The preparation is done using templates which activate the stakeholders and brings the strategic understanding to a common ground. Through clear leadership guidelines and preparing well before the session, the stage is set to fully engage in the strategy re-alignment session.

#### Bottom-up support

Through engaging and including the different regions and countries throughout the whole process, the entire organization is supported in a bottom-up manner.

#### Growth Mindset

Customer centricity to create common goals and shared vision



#### Bottom-up support

Inclusive process where each department has an active role. Everyone is interdependent from each other.

Figure 37: Evaluation of Design Goals

## 12.2 Innovation sweet spot

In this chapter, we examine the proposed strategy process through the lens of IDEO's "innovation sweet spot". The innovation sweet spot balances desirability, feasibility and viability. Although the final process could not be fully tested during the project, insights were gathered through individual assessments, iteration sessions with stakeholders and final evaluations conducted with the Strategy & Transformation team. The following subchapters explore each dimension of the innovation sweet spot, addressing how well the concept aligns with stakeholder needs (desirability), how realistically it can be implemented (feasibility) and how it contributes to long-term success (viability).

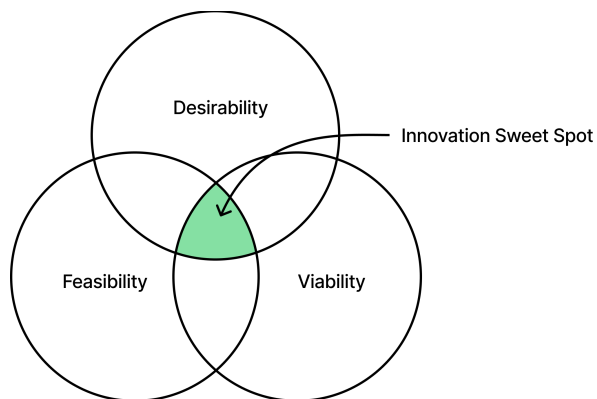


Figure 38: The innovation sweet spot model by IDEO

### 12.2.1 Desirability

For the strategy re-alignment process to be desirable, it must address key stakeholder needs and improve cross-departmental collaboration. Throughout the iteration sessions and stakeholder discussions, a clear demand emerged for stronger leadership guidance, better alignment between departments and a structured session for teams to refine their strategies together. These insights shaped the design, ensuring that the new process directly responds to the challenges faced in the previous cycle.

#### Preparing the teams:

During the iteration sessions, much of the early focus was on which preparation topics each team needed to address. However, stakeholders

repeatedly pointed out the lack of leadership guidance in the previous cycle's preparation phase. The proposed leadership guidelines emerged as a crucial element. Stakeholders responded very positively, mentioning that clear direction from leadership was the element they most wished to see introduced.

#### Organizing stakeholders:

After hosting eleven iteration sessions, it became clear that stakeholders wanted strong alignment with department directors. They also favored physical meetings that would enable deeper discussions between teams. The hypothesis that a region should only engage with one market segment at a time was confirmed and stakeholders embraced the idea of rotating the market segments every two hours. This approach was viewed as an effective way to make sure that each stakeholder had meaningful conversations with the relevant departments.

Although there were some calls to include additional functional leaders in the discussions, consensus emerged around starting with the core group of Market Segment Directors, Business Unit Directors, Business Unit Finance Directors and Multi Plant Unit Directors.

#### Strategy re-alignment session:

Interviews and stakeholder discussions reinforced a high sense of urgency to improve cross-departmental collaboration. Participants saw clear value in creating an additional touchpoint before each team moved ahead with its own strategy development. This extra alignment moment was widely seen as a solution that addresses the desire for stronger collaboration between teams.

Multiple stakeholders expressed enthusiasm about placing the customer perspective at the center of strategic conversations. They also appreciated the plan to focus on enhancing competitive advantage in a collaborative setting, rather than working in isolated departmental silos.

#### Potential for improvement

- Stakeholders mention that involving additional functional leaders could



strengthen strategy discussions in the future.

- While there is demand for wider participation, limited time and resources currently limit how many stakeholders can join the re-alignment sessions. Offering additional sessions to include more participants could further improve desirability and inclusivity of the process.

## 12.2.2 Feasibility

For the new strategy development process to be feasible, it must fit within the organization's existing structure while making efficient use of time and resources. The design approach focuses on keeping changes gradual to maintain consistency with previous cycles and avoid overwhelming stakeholders. By introducing new elements step by step, the process remains manageable while ensuring improvements are effectively integrated.

### Preparing the teams

To maintain consistency with previous cycles, the preparation templates remain largely unchanged. However, the addition of a customer needs map raises feasibility questions about how to gather the required customer insights. By adopting Horizon 1 and Horizon 2 approaches, the organization can test and refine its methods for collecting these insights, which helps confirm that the final process is feasible.

Although leadership guidelines are identified as necessary, there is no guarantee leadership will offer concrete directives. Continual communication about the importance of clear guidelines remains a priority to keep everyone aligned and motivated.

### Organizing stakeholders

The plan looks to minimize resource use and time commitments by limiting the number of participants and time of the sessions. However, physical constraints and scheduling conflicts are still an ongoing challenge. Ensuring leadership recognizes the value of the process can make way for teams to invest an entire day to meeting in person.

Facilitators play a key role in managing stakeholder dynamics. They help keep discussions focused and ensure that limited meeting time is used effectively. A smaller group of participants further supports feasibility by reducing coordination complexity. Additionally the participants are all chosen with care to fulfill their own specific role.

### Strategy re-alignment session

The simplified competitive advantage discussion in Horizon 1 limits concerns about significant changes in format or the level of preparation needed for a fully customer-centric approach. Although the organization has never carried out a customer-centric competitive positioning session, similar sessions in other organizations have proven to align teams effectively around a common vision. Building on these successful models increases confidence in the feasibility of adopting the method.

### Implementation strategy

A gradual implementation strategy is central to the entire design, making sure new elements are introduced and tested step by step. This incremental approach gives stakeholders time to adjust and helps preserve process consistency across horizons. As each phase builds on the last, feasibility remains manageable and any necessary adjustments can be made early instead of requiring last-minute changes.

### Potential for improvement:

- Feasibility rises if leadership allocates more time and resources for strategic discussions.
- Exploring digital options for collaboration can potentially increase the feasibility.
- Improving the methods used to gather customer insights improves both the quality and the efficiency of preparation which makes the overall process more effective.



### 12.2.3 Viability

For a new strategy development process to be viable, it must contribute to long-term business success while improving efficiency and collaboration. The redesigned approach aims to create strategies that align with corporate ambitions, enhance teamwork across departments and keep the process both effective and resource efficient. Ensuring that the strategy process fits within the organization's existing structure is also key to its sustainability.

#### **Preparing the teams**

Clear leadership guidelines help teams craft strategies that align with corporate ambitions. This clarity reduces misaligned spending and supports a more accurate approach to resource allocation. Over time, it can also lead to measurable improvements in financial performance.

#### **Organizing stakeholders**

Arranging two strategy days represents a modest investment compared to the costs of persistent interdepartmental misalignment. By bringing cross-functional teams together, the organization follows a path supported by the research of Kahn (1996), who found that effective collaboration positively influences both product development success and overall company performance. In the long term, a strong matrix organizational structure supports better strategic outcomes and aligns with the company's future goals.

#### **Strategy re-alignment session**

Conducting a re-alignment session early in the strategy process reduces the need for extensive adjustments later. Establishing a shared understanding of desired future positioning lowers the risk of wasteful investments that do not align with the organization's overall direction. By emphasizing customer-centric value propositions, the new positioning better reflects real customer needs, which can improve market competitiveness and drive higher sales. Customer centricity remains a strategic priority and this session reinforces the importance of

creating products and services that address actual market demands.

#### **Potential for improvement:**

- Make sure that outputs and recommendations from these sessions explicitly connect to the organization's overarching strategic objectives, so that individual departmental plans clearly support corporate ambitions.
- Incorporate key performance indicators (KPIs) that measure how higher-quality strategies affect the bottom line, helping leadership be convinced about the cost-benefit ratio of the new process.

# 13 Conclusion & Discussion

## 13.1 Conclusion

This master thesis project studied the bottom-up strategy development process of a large multinational organization to refine and optimize how regional business units develop their strategies. The shift to a matrix structure and a more decentralized strategy process created challenges in ensuring alignment between global market segments, regional business units and multi-plant units. Limited cross-functional collaboration and misalignment in strategy development led to inefficiencies, making it difficult to connect high-level strategic direction with regional implementation. This research aimed to bridge these gaps by developing an improved strategy process that enhances collaboration, fosters strategic alignment and strengthens customer-centric future positioning. Through extensive research, participatory experience, literature reviews, stakeholder interviews, expert discussions, creative ideation sessions and stakeholder iteration sessions, a solution was developed that enhances strategic dialogue between key departments, specifically market segments, business units and multi-plant units.

The organization recently introduced a regional approach that operates within a matrix structure, balancing local responsiveness with global strategic coherence. The literature review highlighted that strategy is multidimensional, integrating elements of deliberate planning, emergent adaptation, competitive positioning and organizational coherence. While structured strategic planning provides clarity and control, strategic management emphasizes adaptability and open strategy promotes inclusiveness and transparency. These strategic approaches must be balanced within the matrix structure to improve interdepartmental collaboration and strategy execution.

From the literature, it became evident that this new strategy process aligns more closely with open strategy by involving a broader range of regional stakeholders in strategy development. Traditionally in this organization, strategy formulation was more centralized, limiting participation to higher corporate levels. However, by incorporating regional business units and multi-plant units in structured discussions, this process increases transparency, inclusiveness and local responsiveness. This aligns with key principles of open strategy. This shift allows for greater knowledge-sharing across functions, ensuring that regional teams have a more active role in shaping strategic direction while maintaining alignment with corporate strategic direction.

Because of the matrix structure and the move toward a more inclusive strategy process, interdepartmental integration became even more crucial. 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. Without effective interdepartmental integration, strategy execution risks becoming fragmented, leading to misaligned priorities and inefficiencies.

To bridge this gap and increase strategic dialogue, a structured solution was designed that aligns teams before they develop their respective strategies. This solution consists of three interconnected elements. The first element is **setting the stage**, which ensures all stakeholders are well-prepared and aligned on strategic topics before the session. Leadership guidelines provide clear guard rails that prevents misalignment in strategic focus. The second element is **organizing stakeholders**, where a rotating physical strategy session is introduced. This allows business units, multi-plant units and market segments to engage in structured discussions. Over two days, every two hours, market segments rotate between different regional business units and multi-plant units, ensuring deep, focused and efficient discussions. The final element is the **strategy re-**

**alignment session**, where a customer-centric approach to competitive positioning ensures an outside-in perspective. Stakeholders collectively define future competitive positioning, creating a shared strategic focus and alignment before strategy development begins.

This structured approach enhances efficiency, collaboration and customer focus. By establishing base alignment before strategy development begins, teams reduce inefficiencies and ensure that all key players are on the same page from the start. Strengthening collaboration within the matrix structure improves coordination across departments, fostering a more collaborative mindset for strategy execution. The process ensures that teams align on future positioning, creating a shared understanding of strategic direction. By promoting collective decision-making, the solution reduces inconsistencies that arise when strategies are developed in isolation. Placing customer-centricity at the core of the discussion encourages the creation of value propositions that directly address customer needs. Additionally, customer-centricity also functions as a shared focus which gives all stakeholders an outside-in perspective to focus on. This refined approach ultimately enhances competitive positioning, ensuring that both regional and global strategies align effectively.

To ensure smooth adoption, the implementation follows a gradual approach in three horizons. It begins with simplified discussions and evolves toward full customer-centric strategy alignment over time. The first horizon introduces a simplified competitive positioning session that focuses on broad alignment rather than deep customer insights, allowing stakeholders to ease into the process. The second horizon expands the approach by incorporating customer needs discussions in selected markets, refining the process before full-scale implementation. In the third and final horizon, expected within five years, the organization will fully integrate the customer-centric strategy re-alignment session into its standard strategy development process cycle.

Beyond improving alignment and collaboration, this structured approach improves the organization's ability to develop strategies that are more customer-centric and responsive to market needs. By fostering cross-functional engagement early in the process, the solution reduces inefficiencies, improves decision-making speed and ensures that regional strategies are directly linked to both corporate objectives and customer expectations. Additionally, by integrating leadership guidance more effectively, the process ensures that strategy building remains both decentralized and strategically coherent which creates a more agile and resilient organization.

Moving forward, the organization should focus on further refining customer insights collection and reinforcing leadership engagement in the strategy process. By refining and adapting this approach, the organization can build a sustainable strategy development process that fosters a collaborative mindset, stays flexible while maintaining clear direction and secures long-term competitive advantage in a changing market environment.

## 13.2 Discussion

This chapter discusses the study's key findings in three distinct areas: theoretical contributions, service blueprint for internal processes and AI-driven ideation.

First, the findings on open strategy, strategic adaptation and interdepartmental integration contribute to strategic management literature. Here the challenges are highlighted in balancing openness with control, maintaining strategic continuity and overcoming departmental silos.

Second, **service blueprinting** is introduced as a design method to analyze and improve strategy development, reframing internal stakeholders as “users” to identify inefficiencies and improve alignment.

Thirdly, the role of **AI in strategy co-creation** is explored, revealing its limitations in generating diverse stakeholder perspectives and suggesting improvements through dynamic AI models and human-AI collaboration.

This structure connects the study's theoretical insights with new methodological approaches, providing a comprehensive view of strategy development in complex organizations.

Finally, the implications, limitations and future recommendations are explained.

### Opening Strategy

Strategy development has become more open, involving a wider range of stakeholders and increasing transparency (Whittington, 2019). In the case study, regional teams contributed to strategy formulation, fostering ownership. However, decision-making remained centralized, leading to frustration as leadership ultimately rejected many employee-driven initiatives despite early indications they would not be accepted. This reflects the dilemma of empowerment, where organizations encourage participation but do not fully distribute decision-making power (Hautz et al., 2017).

A key challenge was misalignment between “users” (Market Segments, Business Units and Multi Plant Units) and “owners” (Leadership

Team and Strategy & Transformation team) of the process. Users looked for flexibility and local responsiveness, whereas leadership prioritized financial control. Additionally, lack of transparency limited trust, as employees were excluded from key decisions with the justification that they “don't have the full picture”. This created a cycle where uninformed employees could not contribute effectively, reinforcing leadership's reluctance to include them.

The quality of contributions also varied, making it difficult to synthesize input into a consolidated global strategy. Group thinking, misalignment and information overload can become a risk (Luedicke et al., 2017; Sibony, 2012). To make open strategy effective, organizations need clear guidelines for participation, structured decision-making and mechanisms to integrate stakeholder insights into real outcomes (Adobor, 2019).

*This section has been moved to the Confidential Appendix.*

### Interdepartmental Integration

Matrix organizations require strong collaboration across departments, yet differences in KPIs and success metrics often create silos (Kahn, 1996). In this case, customer centricity was introduced to align departments around shared goals, reducing fragmentation and improving coordination.

However, saying an organization is customer-centric does not mean it acts that way. Employees who had never seen customer-driven decision-making in action struggled to prioritize it over financial objectives. Lack of interdepartmental trust further limited knowledge sharing and coordination (Kahn, 1996; Lamberti, 2013). Without clear structures for collaboration, interdepartmental silos might continue, hindering aligned strategy development.

To make customer centricity a real strategic driver, companies must foster trust, improve transparency and create structured collaboration processes. Without these,

customer-centric efforts remain fragmented and ineffective.

### **Service Blueprinting**

The organization of the strategic development process can be seen as a service provided by the strategic development team to the “users” in the rest of the organization. An adopted service blueprint was used to analyze internal strategy development, reframing internal stakeholders as “users” of the process (Bitner et al., 2008). This approach identified gaps in alignment, communication barriers and inefficiencies, revealing how stakeholder inputs were often disregarded or misinterpreted. Based on these findings adjustments to the process were suggested. Additionally, a service blueprint was used to map the new strategy development process which creates a clear overview, improving the documentation and transferability to new employees.

### **Artificial Intelligence Ideation**

AI was introduced as a co-creation tool to simulate stakeholder perspectives, since there were logistical challenges in getting all stakeholders together at once. However, AI-generated insights lacked diversity with synthetic stakeholders producing highly similar responses, even when prompted with different backgrounds. For example, when asked to generate analogies, AI consistently provided narrow, repetitive answers, limiting its usefulness.

Additionally, AI often incorporated knowledge beyond the intended scope, making outputs less representative of real stakeholder viewpoints. Debowski et al. (2022) emphasize that AI must be designed to generate diverse perspectives, but current models struggle to achieve this.

To improve AI-assisted ideation, organizations could explore agentic AI models, which allow AI-generated stakeholders to interact dynamically and refine their ideas. Additionally, combining human facilitation with AI insights could create more balanced, diverse and context-aware ideation processes.

### **Theoretical implications**

*This section has been moved to the Confidential Appendix.*

Open strategy aims to include more stakeholders in strategy development but it does not always work in practice, there are a multitude of factors influencing the organizations will to adapt these new approaches. Sometimes attempts to open up strategy, can become symbolic, while lacking actual decision making power and impact from the participants. The sheer amount of strategy documents created can also create a burden on the participants and leadership, ultimately resulting in overcomplexities.

Focusing on customer centricity in collaboration can help break down siloed thinking, this approach to strategic dialogue can help leaders from different departments to work together with shared goals. This could impact the overall communication and collaboration abilities across functions.

### **Managerial implications**

Leading strategic change in conservative and politically complex organizations is challenging. These organizations often have strict hierarchies, a preference for stability and long-standing routines. Because of this, employees and leaders may resist change, making it important for managers to introduce new ideas carefully.

One way to reduce resistance is to start small. Instead of pushing for major transformations all at once, managers should begin with smaller initiatives that clearly show value. When employees and leaders see positive results, they become more open to bigger changes. Building trust step by step helps create a culture that is more willing to embrace new approaches.

Another common challenge is getting employees to focus on customers. Many workers struggle with customer-centricity because they have never seen its impact firsthand. If the benefits are not clear, customer focus can seem like just another abstract idea. To change this, leaders should highlight successful customer-driven projects using real examples and data. When employees see concrete proof that customer

focus leads to better results, they are more likely to support it.

Even when a company faces a crisis, change does not always happen. Organizations may blame external factors like market conditions instead of looking at internal problems. This mindset can stop them from making necessary adjustments. Managers should put systems in place that encourage honest reflection within leadership teams. By identifying and addressing internal barriers, organizations can respond more effectively to challenges.

*This section has been moved to the Confidential Appendix.*

By taking these steps, organizations can reduce resistance, improve adaptability, and create lasting change. Managers who start small, demonstrate the value of customer focus, encourage internal reflection, and maintain leadership alignment will have a better chance of successfully leading strategic change.

### Limitations

This study has some limitations that should be considered. Due to time constraints and limited data collection, not all relevant stakeholders in the strategy development process could be interviewed, since there were more than 50 stakeholders involved in the process. This means that some important perspectives may be missing, leading to an incomplete view of the process.

There was also limited time to fully understand the broader organizational context and culture, even though these factors are important for developing an effective strategy process. A longer research period could have provided a deeper understanding of their impact.

Another limitation is that the proposed solution was not tested during this study. As a result, its effectiveness remains theoretical rather than proven in practice. Future research should focus on applying and testing the solution to refine it for this specific organization.

Since this study focuses on only one organization, its findings may not apply to other

companies. Factors like industry, company culture, and leadership style could influence the results. Future studies could compare different organizations to see how well the approach works in various settings.

Finally, this research looks at a short-term move toward open strategy but does not measure its long-term impact on the organization. Leadership changes during the study also led to a shift back toward a less open approach. Future research could explore how to maintain openness in strategy development and its long-term effects on business performance.

### Future recommendations

- Strengthen organizational transparency and inclusion through open communication channels. This will play a crucial role in building trust and engagement.
- Embedding customer centricity beyond buzzwords, champion customer centricity efforts to implement it throughout the organization.
- Managing organizational politics and change resistance, use small iterative changes to reduce resistance.
- Further research on collaboration in regional based matrix organizations, evaluating roles and structures that further support cross-regional collaboration.
- Future research on customer-centricity as a way of creating internal alignment in organizations, see if this mindset can bring employees further together in their collaborative efforts.
- Thoroughly test the customer-centric realignment session to optimize preparation, time efficiency during the session and the quality of the session output.

## 13.3 Personal reflection

Working on this project has been a great learning experience. One of the biggest challenges was balancing the different views between my education in strategic design and the company's



financial and analytical approach. During my Strategic Design education, customers and users were always a central point, however, the organization prioritizes financial planning and projections. My instinct was to put the customer first, but I learned that with high levels of abstraction it is sometimes required to have a more helicopter view of the situation. The best solution is likely a balance between both perspectives. It was interesting to learn from both university mentors and company mentors at the same time. This made it even clearer how different theory and practice can be.

It also took much longer than expected to truly understand the organization. Even after six months, I only recently felt like I had a feeling for the complex dynamics that influence strategic development and decisions. At first, the process seemed structured and straightforward. Over time, I realized how many factors shape strategy development, from corporate priorities to regional needs and leadership styles. Understanding these layers was key to creating an actionable solution.

This project gave me the chance to learn in a broad domain. I started with a research question about strategy development and ended up working on collaboration and customer centric future positioning. The organizational setup, with its matrix structure and regional approach, was completely new to me. Connecting what I learned in education to a real business environment has been a big learning opportunity.

I am very grateful for the chance to speak with so many stakeholders across different levels and countries. Their insights were crucial in helping me understand the context and reframe the problem. Without these conversations, it would have been much harder to create a practical solution that aligns well with this specific organization. I also appreciate the external experts I could consult during this project. Their knowledge helped me make sense of the complexities of strategy development in large organizations.

This experience has been eye-opening. While I started with a strong academic background,

working inside the company gave me a more nuanced view of strategy. I now have a much better understanding of how organizations work and what it takes to develop strategies and create environments for effective collaboration.



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## Personal Project Brief – IDE Master Graduation Project

Name student \_\_\_\_\_

Student number \_\_\_\_\_

### PROJECT TITLE, INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM DEFINITION and ASSIGNMENT

Complete all fields, keep information clear, specific and concise

Project title \_\_\_\_\_

*Please state the title of your graduation project (above). Keep the title compact and simple. Do not use abbreviations. The remainder of this document allows you to define and clarify your graduation project.*

#### Introduction

*Describe the context of your project here; What is the domain in which your project takes place? Who are the main stakeholders and what interests are at stake? Describe the opportunities (and limitations) in this domain to better serve the stakeholder interests. (max 250 words)*

→ space available for images / figures on next page

*introduction (continued): space for images*

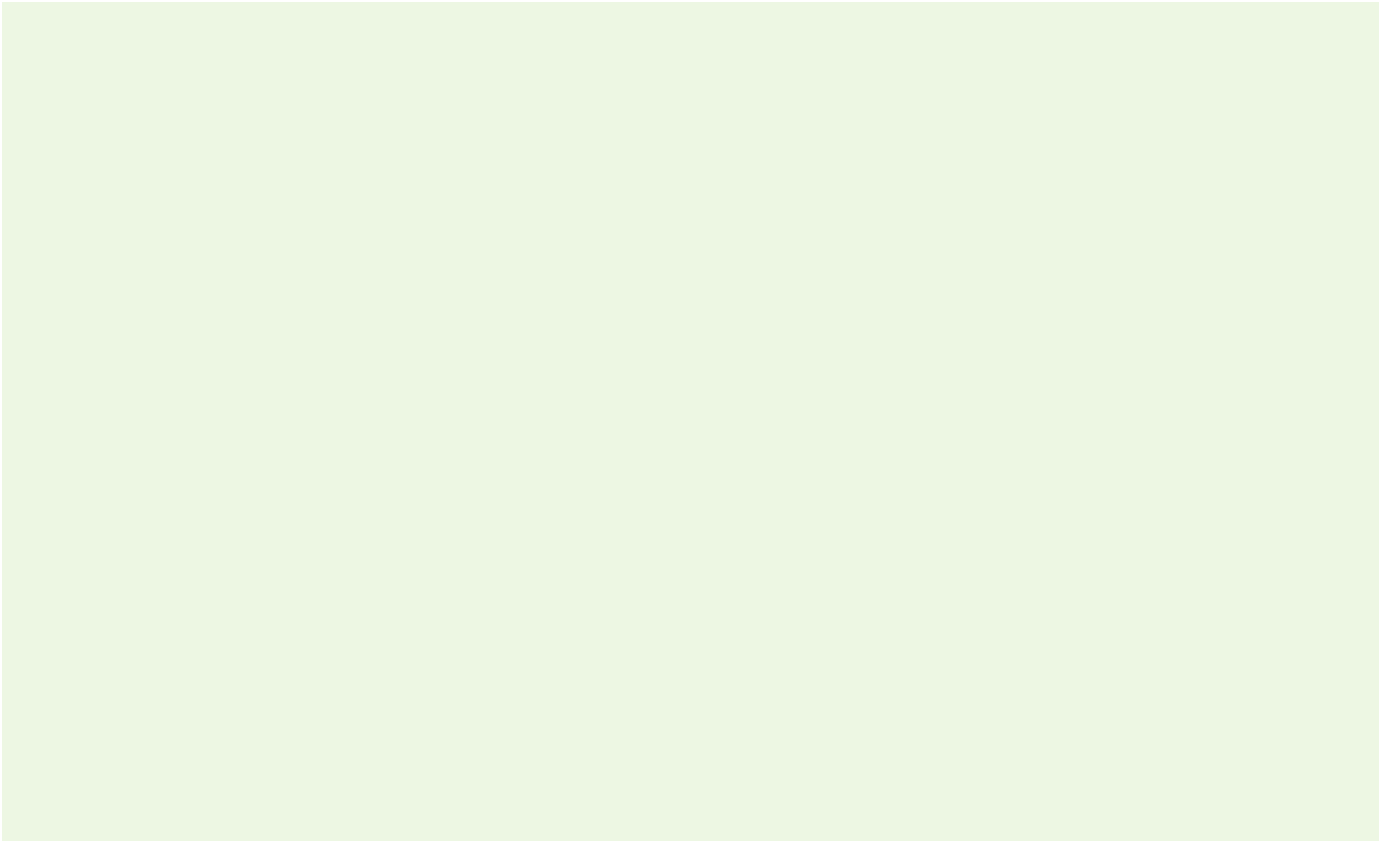


image / figure 1

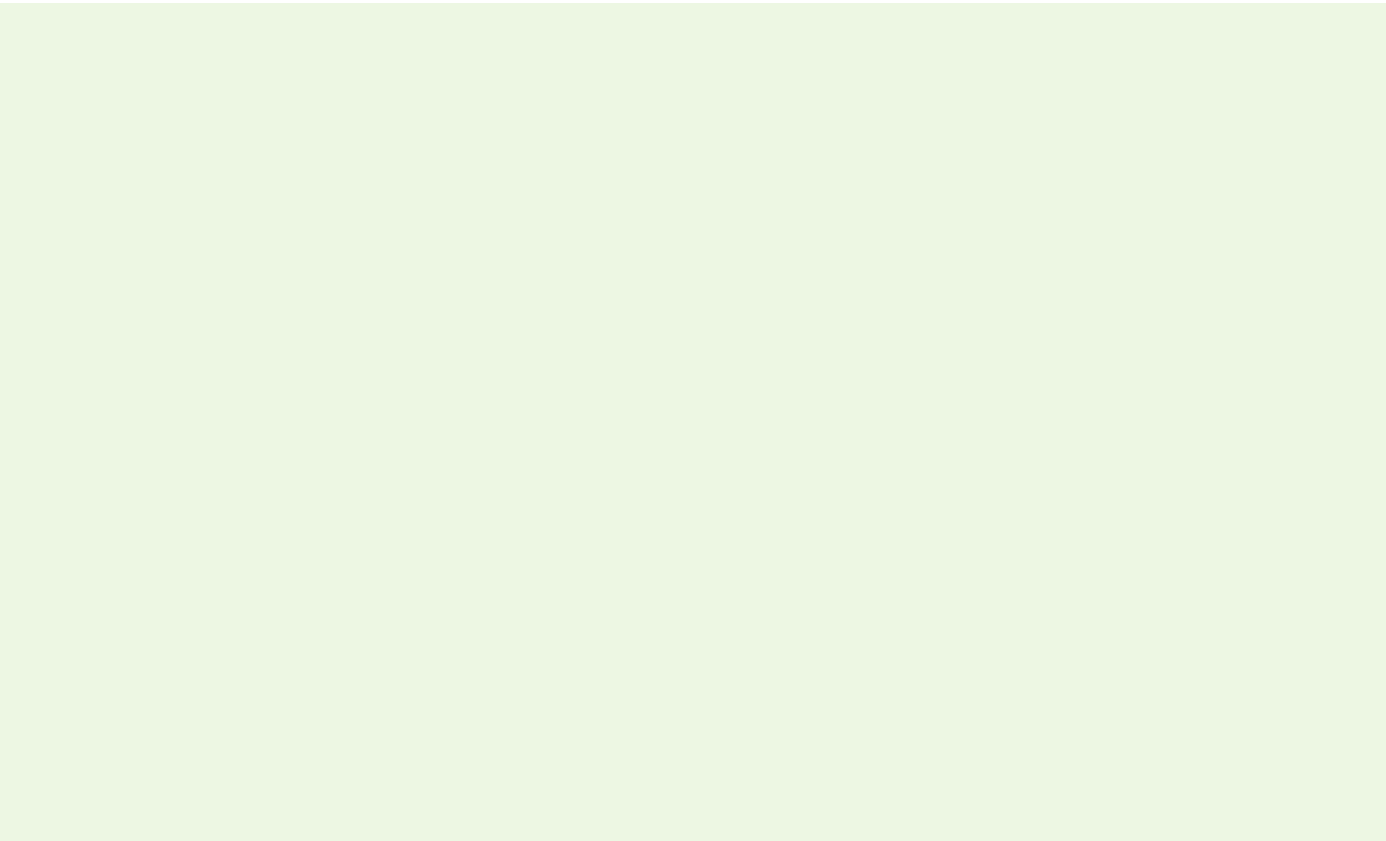


image / figure 2

## Personal Project Brief – IDE Master Graduation Project

### Problem Definition

*What problem do you want to solve in the context described in the introduction, and within the available time frame of 100 working days? (= Master Graduation Project of 30 EC). What opportunities do you see to create added value for the described stakeholders? Substantiate your choice.  
(max 200 words)*

### Assignment

*This is the most important part of the project brief because it will give a clear direction of what you are heading for. Formulate an assignment to yourself regarding what you expect to deliver as result at the end of your project. (1 sentence)  
As you graduate as an industrial design engineer, your assignment will start with a verb (Design/Investigate/Validate/Create), and you may use the green text format:*

*Then explain your project approach to carrying out your graduation project and what research and design methods you plan to use to generate your design solution (max 150 words)*

Project planning and key moments

To make visible how you plan to spend your time, you must make a planning for the full project. You are advised to use a Gantt chart format to show the different phases of your project, deliverables you have in mind, meetings and in-between deadlines. Keep in mind that all activities should fit within the given run time of 100 working days. Your planning should include a **kick-off meeting, mid-term evaluation meeting, green light meeting** and **graduation ceremony**. Please indicate periods of part-time activities and/or periods of not spending time on your graduation project, if any (for instance because of holidays or parallel course activities).

Make sure to attach the full plan to this project brief.  
The four key moment dates must be filled in below

Kick off meeting

14 Oct 2024

Mid-term evaluation

9 Dec 2024

Green light meeting

14 Feb 2025

Graduation ceremony

24 Mar 2025

In exceptional cases (part of) the Graduation Project may need to be scheduled part-time. Indicate here if such applies to your project

Part of project scheduled part-time	<input type="checkbox"/>
For how many project weeks	<input type="text"/>
Number of project days per week	<input type="text"/>

Comments:  
2 week Christmas break- 23-12 until 05-01  
1 week break in Februari 17-02 until 23-02

Motivation and personal ambitions

Explain why you wish to start this project, what competencies you want to prove or develop (e.g. competencies acquired in your MSc programme, electives, extra-curricular activities or other).

Optionally, describe whether you have some personal learning ambitions which you explicitly want to address in this project, on top of the learning objectives of the Graduation Project itself. You might think of e.g. acquiring in depth knowledge on a specific subject, broadening your competencies or experimenting with a specific tool or methodology. Personal learning ambitions are limited to a maximum number of five.  
(200 words max)

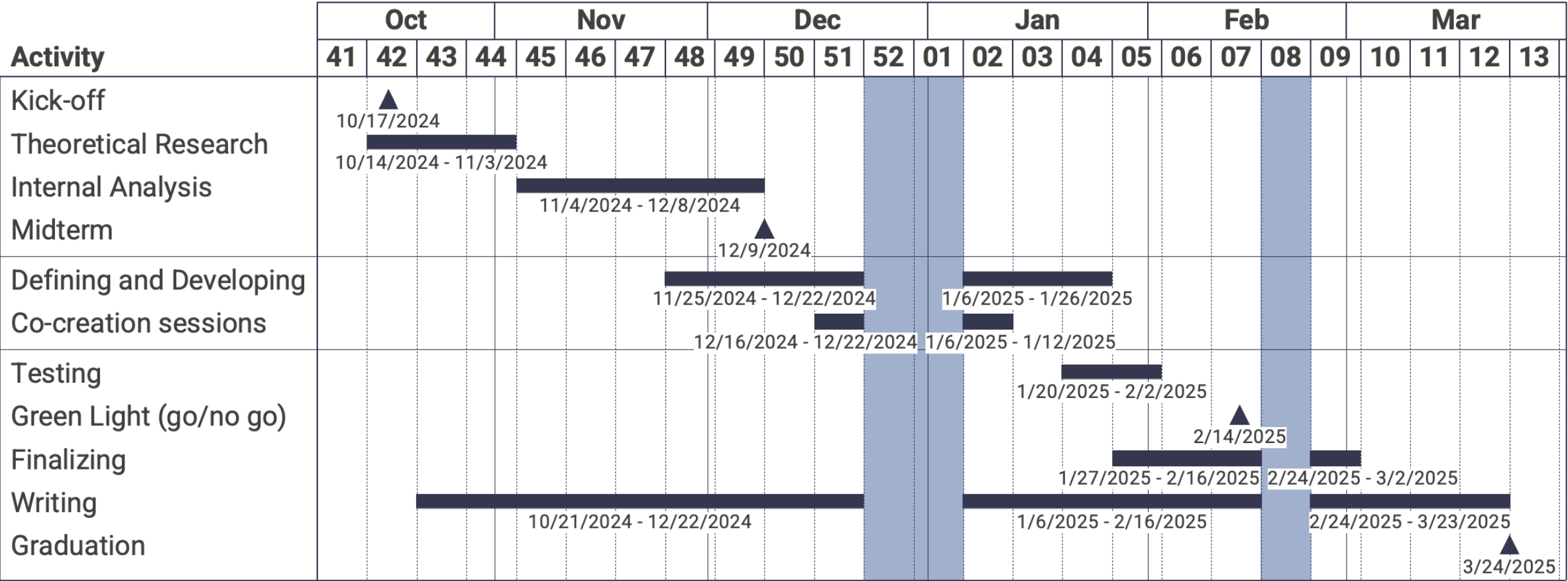
I wish to start this project because [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] My interest lies in the strategic management aspect of the organization, and I am eager to explore how design theory and practice can support the strategic initiatives of large global organizations. This project provides an opportunity to apply my academic learnings in a real-world setting, adding tangible value to the organization.

My key competencies include strategic thinking, analytical skills, and a strong foundation in design theory acquired during my MSc program. Through this project, I aim to demonstrate how a design approach can yield quality results in strategy development and persuade top management of its benefits.

Furthermore, I have a personal learning ambition to bridge the gap between a financially driven corporate environment and the design strategy emphasized in my MSc education. This project will enable me to integrate these two perspectives, showcasing how design strategy can complement and enhance traditional financial planning. By achieving this, I hope to contribute to the development of a more holistic and innovative approach to strategic management within the organization.



# Timeline



From 14-10-2024 to 24-03-2025  
23 weeks, 3 weeks break = 20 weeks  
100 working days

12/23/2024 - 1/5/2025

Break  
2/17/2025 - 2/23/2025