Chapter 8
Balancing Unit and Team Level Strategies and Cultures

ABSTRACT

The goal of this chapter is to identify methods for reducing the risk of strategic failures at the division, the unit, the community, or the team level. In particular, the authors are interested in managing those risks that relate to information strategies and the businesses' use of information in the day-to-day work and operations of any organization. The framework and methodology they follow to identify misalignments, to develop target lists of strategies at risk are the same at these lower levels. What is different is the breadth and depth of business strategies they have to work with, the nature of the impact of lacking or sub-optimized information strategies at the operational level, and the cultural factors they need to see and shape. They establish a general methodology around the framework at the organization level and promote that methodology throughout the organization. The authors walk through the seven-step methodology, noting that line managers and team members must take ownership of and be engaged in the assessment process.

WHY DO WE CARE ABOUT ALIGNING UNIT AND TEAM LEVEL STRATEGIES AND CULTURES?

The goal of this chapter is to identify methods for reducing the risk of strategic failures at the division, the unit, the community, or the team level. In particular, we are interested in managing those risks that relate to information strategies

and the business' use of information in the day to day work and operations of any organization.

All of the arguments and justifications we laid out in Chapter 7 are valid at the operational levels. The risks we encounter at these levels when strategies and cultures are not aligned may have more significant business costs because they impact our products and services – what we do. We will not repeat those arguments and justifications in this chapter, but we do remind the reader that they apply to these levels as well.

The framework and methodology we follow to identify misalignments, to develop target lists of strategies at risk are the same at these lower levels. What is different is the breadth and depth of business strategies we have to work with, the nature of the impact of lacking or sub-optimized information strategies at the operational level, and the cultural factors we need to see and shape.

What is different is who is responsible and accountable for applying the framework, and for shaping culture to support strategy. Ideally, we establish a general methodology around the framework at the organization level and promote that methodology throughout the organization. We apply the framework and shape the culture only at strategic points in the organization. Moreover, we must put the process in the hands of those who are responsible for achieving the strategic goals and objectives. Managers who are responsible for developing strategies should now be responsible for integrating cultural analysis into the strategy development and management process. Then each leader, each division, each unit – designs a fit to support the current business need. Over time this approach gradually creates a new business methodology. It shifts the nature of strategic planning always to include culture shaping. Shaping our culture becomes part of the way we work.

ADAPTING THE FRAMEWORK TO UNIT AND TEAM LEVELS

How do we adapt to the framework? Of the seven steps, which steps change, and which remain the same? For those that change, what changes?

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