SUMMITEERS

WE GET YOU THERE

Strategy execution: not something you do on the side

The Summiteers Way: from shared ambition to successful implementation

Strategy Execution: A Craft

As a director or senior manager, you are largely absorbed by leading the organisation and ensuring daily results. That is your job and that takes (most of) your time and mindspace. Strategic change, however, requires a different set of skills from those you typically use day-to-day. This is entirely understandable. In practice, the combination of "running the business" and "changing the business" often proves to be a significant challenge. While leadership teams excel at managing operations, executing your strategy presents its own unique difficulties.

Strategy execution is not something you do on the side. It demands specific competencies, time, headspace, and a structured approach.

In this guide, we introduce you to The Summiteers Way, our proven method of strategy execution. Executing strategy means driving change, and driving change is a craft. It’s our craft. We take pride in the results our clients have achieved with us over the years. Here, we introduce our WHAT-HOW-DO methodology and highlight the key pillars of strategy execution. We also explore common pitfalls and how to effectively develop strategy execution capabilities within your organisation.

A Strategy without HOW is not a Strategy

Does this sound familiar? You’ve developed a strategy, set an ambitious goal, yet the execution fails to take off. Or perhaps you've experienced this: the strategy is clear, but as soon as it's time to prioritise when you are implementing, confusion, doubt and friction arise.

You're not alone. Many organisations set a direction but struggle with execution. The root cause often lies in an overemphasis on the WHAT - the vision, the goal, the summit they want to reach, while the HOW receives far less attention. The result: a beautiful vision without a plan how to realise that vision, leaving the organisation stuck in a state of "now what?"

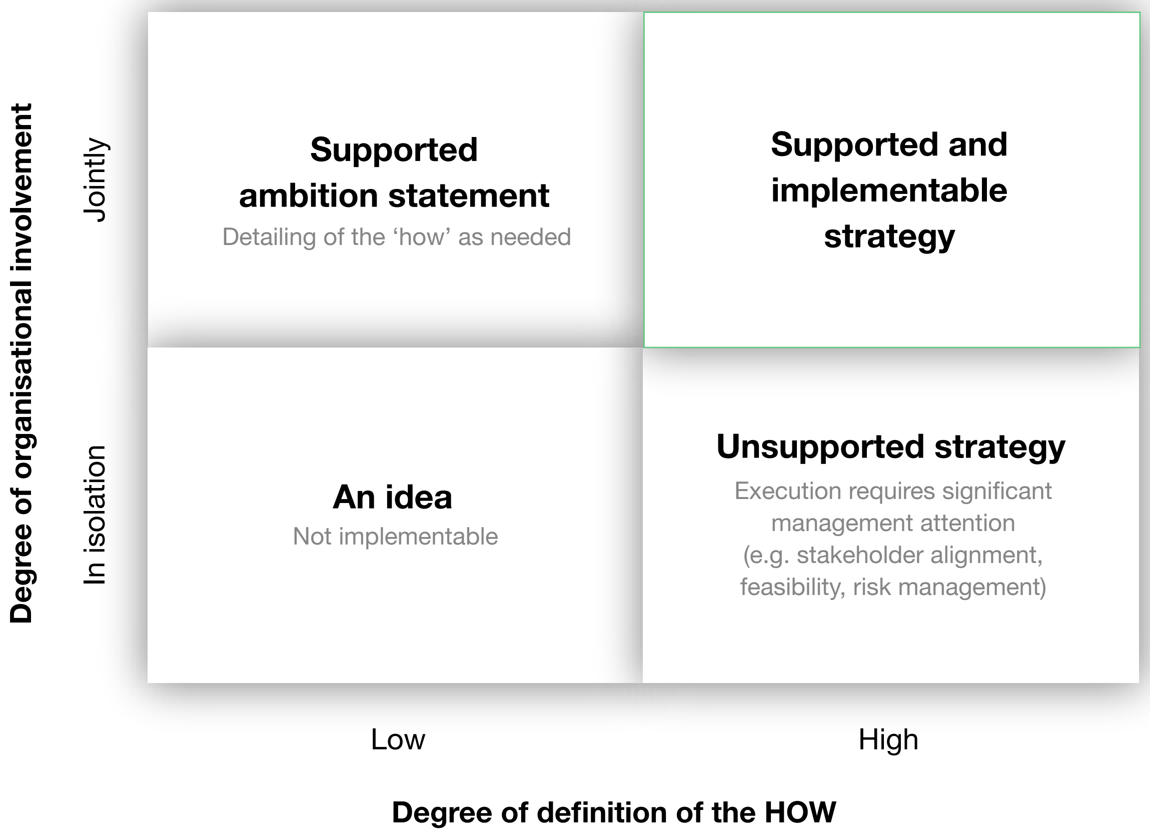
Many companies and consultancies treat strategy-making as merely answering the WHAT question. They view the execution of that strategy as a separate, disconnected track/project/responsibility, often with poor results.

At Summiteers, we view strategy execution as the complete process: from shaping ambition, to making it happen. For us, strategy execution starts the moment you begin talking about your ambition, not after you’ve determined your WHAT. Implementing your strategy starts straight away. It is not a separate phase. We cannot emphasise this enough. Early involvement of your organisation creates ownership, commitment, and clarity. This is one of the keys factors to success.

You have a good strategy when few HOW questions remain

Our belief is simple: a strategy without a clearly defined HOW is not a strategy; it's an ambition statement. In our view, a good strategy is one that is inherently implementable. You know your strategy is well-formulated when very few HOW questions remain. Now, look at your strategy: does it fit this definition?

Figure 1. A strategy is only useful if it can be executed, right? Co-create the plan and define the ‘how’ clearly to ensure a supported and implementable strategy.



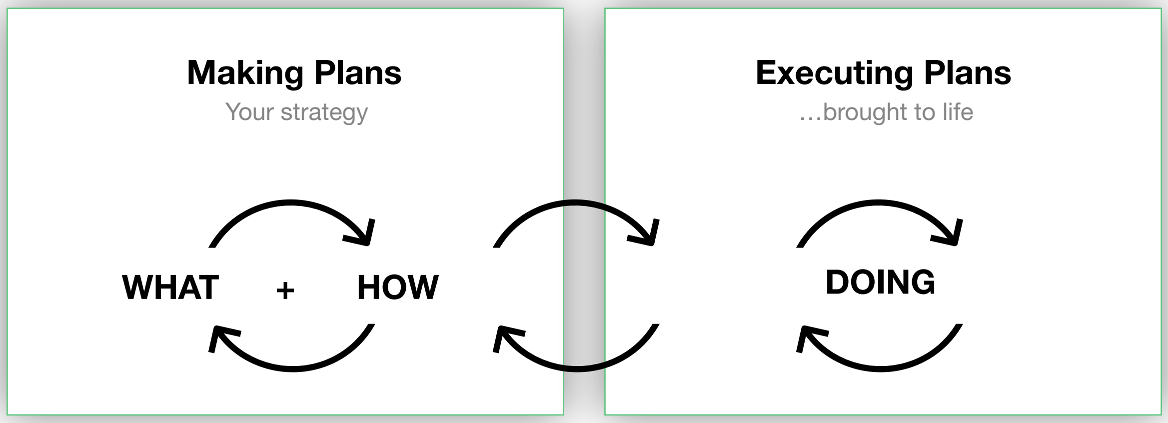
Strategy Execution the Summiteers Way.
The WHAT-HOW-DO Cycle

Strategy execution is an iterative process of defining realistic plans and executing those plans. It starts with a clear ambition (the WHAT), translating that into actionable plans with clearly assigned responsibilities (the HOW), and then ensuring effective implementation (the DO). Each phase demands structure, coordination, and co-creation. It's not enough to have solid content, you must also carefully manage the process, e.g. managing timelines, ensuring decisions get made and involving the people responsible for carrying out the change (WHAT and HOW).

Iterative because in practice you will sometimes need to revisit a previous phase because you gain new insights that have consequences for your organisational design for example.

Figure 2. Effective strategy includes both the **WHAT** and the **HOW**, and is developed with the people who will execute it. Strategy execution is an iterative process of creating actionable plans and putting them into practice.

Strategy Execution



WHAT: Defining the Goal

The WHAT phase is about making clear strategic choices and defining a clear destination.
Typical questions for this phase include:

- **What kind of business (unit) or department do we want to be? What do we explicitly not want to be?**
- **Where do we want to be in X years?**
- **What strategic objectives do we aim to achieve?**
- **What is our value proposition and service offering? What needs to change?**
- **What does the competition look like?**
- **What should the organisation look like to get there?**

An important deliverable of the WHAT phase is a Target Operating Model (TOM). But does that mean your strategy is the same as the TOM? In short: no. Your strategy also includes the plans for HOW to realise that TOM. The TOM provides the substantive direction and is therefore a key deliverable of the WHAT phase. This is because the choices regarding your ambition, proposition (where to play), and the design of your organisation (how to win), are all made in this phase.

Although this step may seem straightforward, in practice, organisations often rush through it. An unclear WHAT always leads to a problematic implementation. A strong WHAT provides direction, but without a defined HOW, it lacks executable clarity.

A well-defined goal serves as the backbone of successful strategy execution, offering guidance and focus to the entire organisation.

Figure 3. The “WHAT” is about defining what you want to achieve and where you want to go. It also covers which products and services you will offer, and how you set up your organisation to execute the strategy effectively.

Strategic direction

- What kind of organisation do we want to become? What is our ambition?
- Where do we want to be in X years - what is our dot on the horizon?
- What are our strategic objectives?
- ...

Proposition

- Which products and services do we offer to which customers?
- What is our role in the value chain/market, and which products/services do we offer?
- Where do we offer our products geographically?
- ...

Operating model

- What do our core processes look like?
- What does our organisational structure and governance framework look like?
- Which roles and mandates are required?
- What kind of culture and leadership are needed to win?
- ...

Context matters. These questions always have a broader context. This context functions as boundaries to the WHAT but should also be challenged.

Practical Tip

Organise strategy workshops with a diverse group from across the organisation to define and clarify your vision and strategic choices. Ask the right questions, create space for reflection, and make real choices. Choosing is a key part of strategy. For example: what are we NOT going to do? Make it as concrete as possible. This not only clarifies and sets the direction but also builds ownership among those involved.

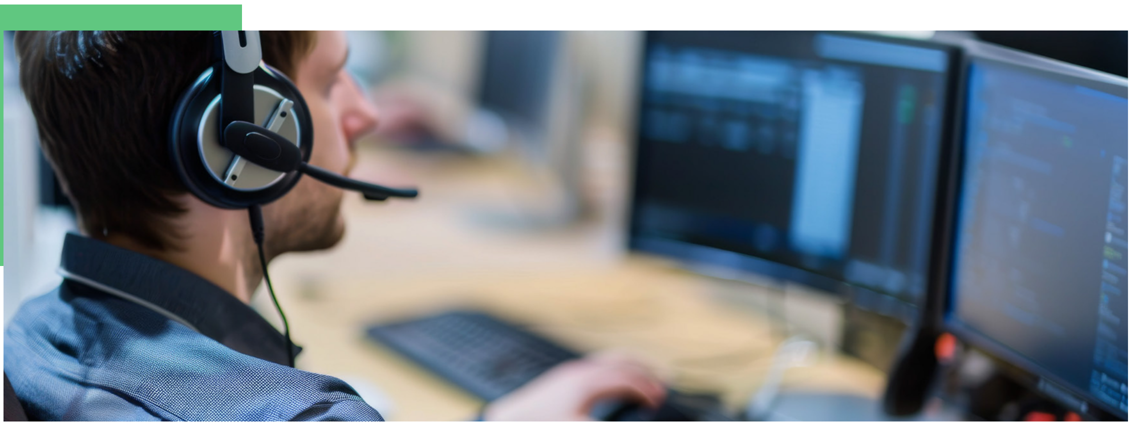
Mini Case:
WHAT Phase at ANWB Emergency Call Centre

The ANWB Emergency Call Centre (Roadside Assistance Centre) is the central contact point for ANWB members experiencing car trouble in the Netherlands and abroad. From this hub, all roadside assistance is coordinated. A range of internal and external developments, including technological advancements and labour market pressure, prompted a re-evaluation of the organisation's strategy and operating model. Was it still future-proof? What needed to change? And how could the organisation respond effectively to emerging challenges?

Summiteers supported ANWB in designing and implementing the Emergency Call Centre of the future. We began with several executive-level sessions to clearly define the role of the Emergency Call Centre, within the broader ANWB assistance value chain. In these sessions, we explored fundamental questions: What is ANWB's assistance proposition? Who are the customers? Where is the market heading? What technological developments are shaping the future? And how does the Emergency Call Centre relate to other supply chain partners in fulfilling this proposition?

Building on this foundation, we worked towards a clear vision for the future Emergency Call Centre and the associated service model; the "dot on the horizon”. From the very start, we involved both members of the management team and a selection of employees. Through a series of intensive design workshops, we progressively refined the future model while addressing emerging questions along the way. Together, we tackled issues ranging from the impact of AI and centralisation of tasks across teams and locations, to defining the governance structure of the future organisation. The result was a clear vision and a well-developed organisational design (Target Operating Model), marking the definition of the WHAT.

During this phase, we also devoted significant attention to what we call the "behavioural (development) component”, which we will explain further on in this guide. It is crucial to address collaboration-related questions: Do we understand each other? How is each individual engaging in this process? What behaviours are people exhibiting? And how can this journey serve as a growth opportunity for both individuals and the team as a whole?



HOW: Detailing the Route

Now that the ambition is clear, the WHAT has been defined, time to mobilise the organisation and begin implementation right? This is often where things go wrong.

A WHAT without a HOW is just an ambition statement. A strong strategy must be implementable. In the HOW phase, you define who will do what, when, during the DO phase. This includes:

- **Translating strategic choices into concrete initiatives (often organised as projects)**
- **Creating a roadmap for the projects with a logical sequence and well-defined milestones**
- **Establishing a governance structure for the projects**
- **Communicating effectively and continuously**

The HOW phase is critical to making your strategy executable. This is where difficult decisions are made that determine whether your plan will actually work. Typically, more people are involved in this phase compared to the WHAT phase, both to tap into detailed knowledge and to build ownership.

An important insight: the WHAT is often refined during the HOW phase

In practice, organisations often create a high-level TOM during the WHAT phase, including ambition, value propositions, and design principles. Detailed design then continues iteratively throughout the HOW phase. This iterative process between WHAT and HOW ensures the plan remains both ambitious and realistic.

It is also essential to consider your organisation's change capability. A common pitfall is tackling too many complex issues simultaneously, which overwhelms the system and causes initiatives to stall.

> ### Practical Tip
> Involve the people who will execute the plans in the DO phase during the HOW phase. Their input leads to stronger plans and again increases commitment to execution. Be explicit about what you will not do as well. Making choices is essential.

Mini Case:
HOW Phase at ANWB Emergency Call Centre

Once the WHAT had been clearly defined through a shared vision and organisational design (Target Operating Model), it was time to translate it into the HOW. During this phase, we again collaborated closely with the employees of the Emergency Call Centre. Together, we identified the "big rocks"; the key projects necessary to realise the future organisation. We revisited the design from the WHAT phase a couple of times while defining the projects.

We mapped the projects onto a roadmap with clearly defined milestones. For each project, we assigned an MT (management team) lead and appointed a project manager from within the organisation, supported by dedicated teams. Each project had a detailed plan, and we systematically mapped dependencies between them. As in the WHAT phase, we put a lot of effort into buy-in.

To conclude the phase, we established a programme governance structure to steer execution effectively, monitor progress, and facilitate decision-making. With this, the HOW was in place: who will do what, and when, to realise the defined WHAT? It was clear- this is how we'll do it.

This phase again included structural attention to behavioural reflection and team dynamics. Time and again, we see that personal and professional growth align naturally with strategic change efforts, and this project was no exception.

DO: Execution, Monitoring and Adjustment

In the DO phase, the plans from the HOW phase are put into action, guided by the vision developed in the WHAT phase. Execution involves monitoring, communication, and adjustment, as needed. Key elements in this phase include:

- **Choosing the right execution method (agile vs traditional)**
- **Assigning clear ownership**
- **Managing the overall implementation process**
- **Ongoing monitoring and adjustment**
- **Strong communication**

In this phase, ownership is essential: who is responsible for what? In addition, strong programme leadership is required. Someone who can maintain oversight, identify bottlenecks, and facilitate decision-making. By involving the people who will ultimately execute the plans during both the HOW and WHAT phases, you create a realistic and broadly supported plan. This enables those involved in execution to understand the rationale behind key decisions made.

At times, you may need to return to the HOW phase (for instance, if a certain approach turns out not to work) or even revisit the WHAT phase (if the goal proves unfeasible or your design can be improved upon). This makes strategy execution an inherently iterative process that should continuously take its context into account (see further on – context matters).

Where organisations often fall short in this phase is in failing to ensure adequate project management competence from the outset. While ownership can be assigned, execution will still fail if employees lack sufficient experience with structured project work, planning, risk management and stakeholder engagement.

Time is another critical factor. The DO phase is not something that can be done ’next to your normal job’. It requires focused attention and dedicated capacity. That’s why it is essential to invest in developing the skills needed and to explicitly allocate time for them. This can be achieved by:

- **Training internal staff**
- **Pairing experienced project leaders with less experienced owners**
- **Temporarily hiring external experts who not only support execution but also transfer their knowledge**

Developing strategy execution capabilities within your own organisation is a valuable outcome of a strategic initiative. It strengthens your current ability to drive change and lays the foundation for future strategic success.

> ### Practical
>
> Ensure short *feedback loops* during implementation to track progress effectively. Communication is once again vital in this phase. Regularly ask: Where are we? How are we doing? Celebrate successes, no matter how small, and actively learn from setbacks. This helps sustain momentum and keeps energy and motivation high.

Mini Case:
DO Phase at ANWB Emergency Call Centre

With the roadmap finalised, projects defined, and programme governance established, the execution phase could begin. Summiteers supported the project leaders across three essential dimensions: process (project management), content (organisational development and design detailing), and behaviour (skills and ownership).

We systematically led the programme through weekly stand-ups, where we closely monitored progress and proactively managed dependencies. In content-focused meetings, proposals were critically reviewed and clear decisions were made. This allowed the initial organisational choices from the WHAT phase to be further refined and, where needed, adjusted. A natural, iterative process that brought the future organisation into sharper focus.

In parallel, an HR project was underway (new roles, job descriptions, workers council consultation, etc.), where implementation was carefully and gradually prepared. Communication proved to be a critical success factor: employees were regularly and transparently informed about what was happening, why specific choices were made, and what the concrete implications were for them. This ongoing communication was essential for maintaining high levels of engagement and support.

The implementation itself was strategically divided into manageable phases to introduce changes in a controlled manner and avoid overload. Each plan included not only implementation steps but also thorough post-implementation activities and aftercare. This approach ensured that changes truly took hold and created space for continuous learning and course correction.

The result: a successful transformation toward a future-proof Emergency Call Centre, with employees who did not just undergo the change, but actively contributed to it. The improved processes and clearly defined roles now empower the organisation to continue its development independently and to steadily progress toward realising its strategic ambition.

The Three Pillars of Successful Strategy Execution

At first glance, this may not seem like rocket science: a clear WHAT, a well-developed HOW, and then the DO phase. And yet, execution often fails. What, then, is the difference between success and failure? Based on our experience, we see three critical success factors that determine whether strategy execution succeeds: collaboration, context, and balance.

Pillar 1
Collaboration - strategy making = implementation

Strategy cannot be crafted in an ivory tower. It is essential to involve the people who will carry out the plans in both shaping the strategic direction (the WHAT) and designing the implementation approach (the HOW). This fosters buy-in and ensures you capture their valuable knowledge. How often do we see seemingly brilliant plans that turn out to be practically unworkable during implementation?

By actively involving people across all levels of the organisation, you build a solid foundation of shared understanding and commitment. People buy-in to the change. This does not mean everyone has a say in every decision, that would be unmanageable. Rather, it requires a thoughtful approach from the outset about who to involve and when. Go beyond the usual suspects. Think about who you'll need in every phase: WHAT, HOW, and DO.

How you involve people matters as well. Workshops, surveys, interviews, sounding boards. Each method has its own dynamic and impact. The time invested in carefully designing your participation strategy pays off significantly throughout the process. The result: a plan that is not only supported by the organisation, but also executable.

Practical tip

Organise workshops that allow employees at different levels to contribute to strategic thinking. Encourage them to actively participate in both the WHAT and the HOW. This will not only lead to a better plan but also foster greater ownership during implementation.

Pillar 2
Context matters – the organisational context determines what works

Your strategy (the WHAT and the HOW) is heavily influenced by your organisation's context. While it may be useful during the early stages of the WHAT phase to think outside the box, it is rarely feasible, or even desirable, to challenge everything.

Context largely determines what is needed to anchor and successfully execute a strategy. We cannot emphasise this enough. In practice, we often see organisations overlooking this step, which leads to friction and complications later on. These issues can be avoided with more attention to context at the start.

A thorough context analysis brings realism to your strategy. It helps distinguish between what is fixed (and must be seen as a given) and what can be changed. Some elements of your organisation are a given, and you'll need to accept them as such. Others should be intentionally altered as part of your strategy. Making this distinction explicit is crucial: both dimensions are part of your plan.

Context is a broad concept. We distinguish three key aspects:

1. Change Drivers and History
Understand the external developments and internal triggers behind your strategy (or its reassessment). Why is this change needed? What has been tried in the past? Why did that succeed or fail? A solid grasp of this history helps to avoid repeating mistakes and mitigates hidden resistance rooted in past experiences.

2. Organisational Characteristics
What kind of organisation are you in? What is the prevailing culture? How do people collaborate? What is the available change capacity, both in terms of time and capability? What competencies are present? Don't overlook ongoing major initiatives (like IT implementations), which could compete for time and focus. These factors strongly influence which change approach is likely to succeed. For example, a hierarchical organisation requires a different approach than a network-based one.

3. The Undercurrent
Beyond formal structures lie the informal dynamics between departments, within leadership teams, and across layers. Is there healthy collaboration? Are there historical tensions that must first be resolved? This undercurrent can make or break strategy execution. While often unspoken, these dynamics can have the greatest impact on success.

> ### Practical tip
> Conduct a thorough context analysis before making strategic decisions. Map out what's already in motion, which change initiatives are active, how decisions are made, and the current change capacity. Tailor your approach to these realities. A SWOT analysis can be a great tool to initiate the context conversation.

Pillar 3
Balancing content, process and behaviour

The Summiteers Way is an integrated approach that combines three key dimensions. These dimensions act in synergy and determine how change agents, whether internal or external, can do their work effectively.

Content

High-quality content is essential. Without sound analysis, problem structuring and clear choices, there is no foundation. However, we consistently observe that content alone is not enough to drive successful change. A lot of teams spend all their time in ‘the content’, that is not enough.

Process

A strategy requires a carefully tailored approach with strong coordination and clear communication. Quality content your people buy-in to does not emerge on its own. A well-designed process, supported by effective project and / or programme management, ensures that the right steps are taken in the right order. This creates structure, clarity, and momentum.

Behaviour

At every stage of strategy execution, from making the plans to implementation, you are working with people and their behaviour. This is often where the key to success lies. Attention to behavioural development acts as a catalyst: it accelerates and amplifies the impact of your strategic and organisational interventions. That’s why we believe personal development of those involved is an integral part of successful strategy execution.

All three dimensions are relevant in every step of the execution process. Your organisation's specific context will determine which dimension requires extra focus at any given moment, and where the emphasis of your interventions should be. Sometimes that’s a deep content analysis, other times a tightly managed process, or a focus on collaboration and team dynamics.

Recognising and balancing these three dimensions, and understanding their interdependence, is the difference between a strategy that remains a good intention and one that leads to lasting transformation.

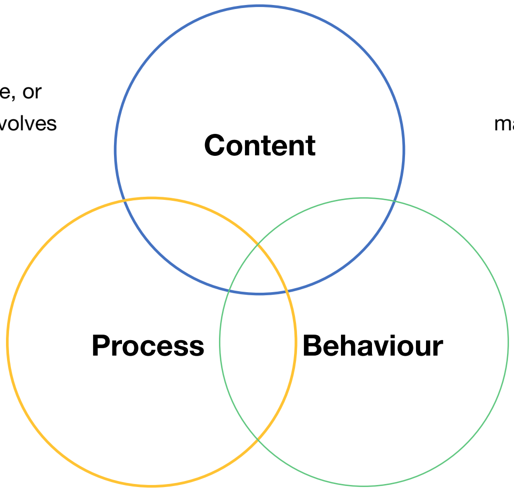
Figure 4. Content, Process, Behaviour. Strategy execution through an integrated approach based on what the context requires

Content

Developing a plan, realising change, or addressing strategic challenges involves more than content alone…

Process

…This requires an approach tailored to the situation, strong governance, and a clear process supported by effective project or programme management…



Behaviour

…Throughout this process (both in making plans and execution) you are dealing with people and human behaviour. Working on behavioural development is crucial - it is the catalyst for impact.

In each step and at every level of the strategy execution process, all these dimensions matter and the context determines what is required in each dimension.

Practical tip

Always start with the process. From the very first moment, establish a solid process. Avoid the common pitfall of diving straight into the content. First, define the steps and clarify what you aim to achieve with each step. Agree on the roles, who does what and when. We often start by creating a "plan for a plan", a structured approach to the initial phase of the project. This provides clarity and direction while still allowing flexibility for adjustments along the way.

Regularly evaluate all three dimensions:

- **Content:** Are we addressing the right issues? Is the level of detail sufficient?
- **Process:** Is this phase progressing as planned? Is our approach working?
- **Behaviour:** How are we collaborating? What behaviours are helping us move forward, and which ones are holding us back?

A familiar pattern: 80 per cent of discussion time tends to be spent on content, which can go on endlessly. The root cause of stalled projects is often not in the content itself but in shortcomings in the process or ineffective behaviour. When people don't fully understand one another it rarely has to do with content itself. For example: they are trying to make their point instead of listening to understand the other person or it could be that the goal of the meeting is not clear.

By actively listening, asking probing questions, and seeking to understand each other's perspectives, you can break through this pattern and achieve more effective collaboration. Most of the times you do not need to explain or detail the content.

The Biggest Pitfalls in Strategy Execution

Above, we've outlined how we believe strategy execution should work. In practice, we unfortunately see recurring pitfalls organisations stumble into. Below, we describe ten common ones, along with suggestions for how to avoid them.

Pitfall 1: "We'll just do this on the side" – no time or capabilities allocated

"A new strategy is needed. We'll start implementing it right away. The team can take it on alongside their day-to-day responsibilities." This happens often and usually fails. It reflects an underestimation of how much time and mental capacity is needed to keep the business running, transforming the business cannot simply be added to that. Yes, minor tweaks might be manageable this way, but for substantial change, forget it.

> **How to avoid it:**
> If you're serious about change, acknowledge that it requires time and attention from those involved. Be realistic about this and free up time for people with the right competencies. Give yourself or the team a clear mandate and focus fully on it.

Pitfall 2: "It's clear enough, right?" – throwing the PowerPoint over the fence

The WHAT is described in a lengthy presentation, and people expect the organisation to magically understand what it means and what to do next. Surprise arises when confusion sets in and progress stalls.

> **How to avoid it:**
> Involve your organisation and treat the WHAT, HOW, and DO phases as a connected whole if you want real results. The WHAT alone isn't a strategy, it's an ambition. When the WHAT phase is approached properly, that ambition becomes understood and supported. Only then can you move on to the HOW, and subsequently, the DO.

Pitfall 3: Splendid isolation – not involving your people

When strategies are developed in isolation, without the involvement of those who must implement them, resistance follows. The classic "not invented here" syndrome kicks in, and even the most brilliant strategy on paper falters in execution.

> **How to avoid it:**
> Involve people from different levels of the organisation in the strategy execution process. Even if urgency requires a small group to develop the strategy quickly, make the time to build buy-in. Give your people a chance to engage with the strategy and offer input so it becomes something they understand and support.

Pitfall 4: Restructuring first – skipping the right order

Announcing a reorganisation may seem decisive—it's highly visible. But we often see this happen before the strategic direction is clear. The result: unnecessary uncertainty, frustration, and often the key employees leaving.

> **How to avoid it:**
> Involve your stakeholders in the way change processes work. Structure follows strategy, remember? Organisational restructuring should come after the strategic direction is defined. Follow the logical order and you'll make faster and better progress in a more constructive atmosphere. This often requires patience and might mean standing your ground when (your colleague) board members want to change the organisational structure right away.

Pitfall 5: Ignoring context – unrealistic expectations

Have you heard these statements: "So, there's no one who can lead the change project? So, we can't update the IT system starting tomorrow? So, everyone's already over capacity?" These surprised reactions stem from overlooking the organisational context when making plans.

> **How to avoid it:**
> Context matters. Carefully analyse what is fixed and what can be changed and reflect these insights in your plans. A realistic view of your organisation's limitations and opportunities is key to a feasible strategy.

Pitfall 6: Ignoring the undercurrent – recurring discussions

"Why do we keep having the same discussions? We thought we had decided, but apparently we didn't." This frustration often arises when informal dynamics between people or departments, the undercurrent, are ignored.

> **How to avoid it:**
> Acknowledge that change is not just about rational arguments but also emotional engagement. Spend time on understanding and addressing the undercurrent. Integrating professional development in your approach (behaviour) is a powerful way to address the undercurrent and work on the dynamics of it.

Pitfall 7: Endless consensus – losing momentum

"Let's have another session to listen to everyone's opinion. Let's properly analyse this direction again." The pursuit of maximum consensus can lead to endless discussions without decisions.

> **How to avoid it:**
> Consensus matters, but so do clarity and decisiveness. Allow room for input in your process but ensure momentum as well by closing discussions at the right moment and making clear choices. Be explicit about what the choice includes, and what it doesn't include. Explicitly ask your team members to commit to the decision. That doesn't mean they have to agree with the decision. They commit to the implementation of it however and can be held accountable.

Pitfall 8: Everything is a priority – no real choices made

Many strategies fail because no real priorities are set. If everything is a priority, then nothing is. This leads to complexity and scattered focus, often rewarding the loudest voices in the room rather than the organisation's true needs.

> **How to avoid it:**
> Simplify. Force yourself and your team to make real choices and consciously narrow the scope. Define what you will and won't do (yet). Break down complexity into manageable parts. Accept that change happens in phases. Rome wasn't built in a day.

Pitfall 9: Random deadlines – unrealistic timelines

"This will be done in ten weeks!", even though there isn't even a basic plan in place. Deadlines are often set without a realistic view of what actually needs to happen. This leads to unnecessary pressure, rushed decisions, and ultimately more delays.

> **How to avoid it:**
> Slow down to speed up: plan realistically and don't give in to the pressure of unrealistic deadlines. This often requires standing your ground. If someone has set a deadline, show understanding and initiate a conversation regarding your role in the execution and that you want to know what is needed to make it happen. The plan is your solution, develop it quickly (iteratively) and use it as the foundation for a realistic discussion about feasibility. Ask the question: "Do you want it fast, or do you want it done right?"

Pitfall 10: Changing course unnecessarily – lack of strategic discipline

Stick to the plan! During execution, there are often calls to "tweak things slightly". Be very cautious. Sometimes there are valid reasons to revisit the HOW or even the WHAT phase. But more often, it's the friction of change itself that triggers resistance and requests for course adjustments, while that friction might actually be a sign that you're on the right track.

> **How to avoid it:**
> Carefully analyse what's really going on. Take a deliberate step back and don't respond impulsively. Don't dismiss concerns too quickly, but don't follow them blindly either. Communicate to those concerned that you will look into it (together), make a plan to do that and execute it directly if possible. Ask yourself the essential questions: what was the original plan, and is this truly a valid reason to deviate from it? Is there an alternative route that both achieves your goal and addresses the concerns raised? By consciously reflecting on these questions, you avoid unnecessary course corrections that can undermine your strategy execution.

Recognising and actively avoiding these pitfalls significantly increases your chances of successful strategy execution. It may take courage, standing your ground, but the outcome, a smoother implementation with less friction and frustration, is well worth the effort.

Investing in strategy execution as a core competency

As we've illustrated above, strategy execution requires much more than having a good idea on paper. It requires people who can provide direction, engage others, and maintain oversight across the WHAT, HOW, and DO phases. This is a craft. One that involves specific competencies. The good news: these competencies can be learned, developed, and strengthened within your organisation.

Building strategy execution as a core competency within your organisation can be a valuable side effect of a strategic initiative, if the process is managed in line with the principles we've described. Most organisations are in a state of ongoing change, which makes investing in this knowledge a smart and forward-looking choice. It not only strengthens your current capacity for change but also lays a strong foundation for future strategic efforts.

You often hear that change is the only constant, and there's a lot of truth to that. That's exactly why strategy execution should be treated as a capability that requires attention and continuous development. It's not a one-off exercise, but something you must actively invest in. Not necessarily by hiring more people or creating a separate team, but by building the skills of your existing employees; strengthening leadership, fostering executional power, and creating ownership at every level.

This might feel like a big step, especially when day-to-day operations already place heavy demands on your team. But organisations that consciously invest in this capability strategically reap the benefits many times over. Not only do they accelerate their strategic initiatives, but they also improve collaboration, decision-making, and adaptability. Strategy execution then becomes not an extra burden that is loaded on top of your normal job, but a natural and embedded way of working. It even makes the work more enjoyable because your teams deliver and can celebrate their successes and grow as professionals along the way.

The best part? You don't have to do everything at once. Start small. Start deliberately. Start early. And gradually build your organisation's capability, not just to craft plans, but to truly bring them to life.

About Summiteers

Summiteers is an expert in the field of strategy execution. We bring structure when clarity is lacking, insight in times of complexity, momentum when things get stuck, and calm during large-scale change. Always in a way that is concrete, manageable, and clear.

We promise our clients three things: you will get there, we will do it together and you will grow as a professional.

Our motto, “Doing fun stuff with great people”, reflects how we approach strategy execution. We don’t believe in strategies developed in an ivory tower. We believe in co-creating and implementing plans together. This is the only way to build real commitment and make use of the valuable knowledge of the people who are essential to making change happen.

We always connect the strategic content and process with the professional development of you and your team, which leads to results that are not only effective but results that last.

Curious how we can support you in shaping and executing your strategy? Reach out via www.summiteers.ie/contact

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WE GET YOU THERE