Management Excellence:
A Step-by-Step Strategy to Success

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EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

To differentiate themselves from competitors, organizations must move beyond operational excellence to become smart, agile, and aligned. These are the characteristics of a company that has achieved management excellence. Oracle has developed the strategy-to-success framework to help business leaders organize, plan, measure, and report for management excellence.

The strategy-to-success framework consists of six interrelated management processes that each results in a key business output. These outputs provide the intelligence and information needed to manage a company for excellence. Organizations that follow best practices for each step in the strategy-to-success cycle manage their performance effectively and set themselves up for long-term success. One in a series of Oracle white papers[1], this paper will outline the process for achieving management excellence.

THE STRATEGY-TO-SUCCESS FRAMEWORK

Extending operational excellence to management excellence is the next strategic imperative for organizations of all sizes, in every market around the world. Increasingly, the only way to differentiate from the competition is to be smarter, more agile, and more aligned. The goal is clear; however, in most organizations, the path for getting there is less so.

Oracle's strategy-to-success framework describes a comprehensive set of management processes that lead organizations toward management excellence. The framework identifies key performance indicators and highlights enterprise performance management techniques and technologies, such as business intelligence tools, that deliver information and analytic capabilities to users.

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[1] The following white papers are available at the white papers link on oracle.com/epm (or oracle.com/solutions/business_intelligence/resource-library-whitepapers.html)
Management Excellence: How Tomorrow's Leaders Will Get Ahead
Management Excellence: The Metrics Reloaded
Achieving Management Excellence: A Step-by Step Strategy to Success
Management Excellence: Techniques and Technologies

The strategy-to-success framework consists of six management processes, in which the output from one becomes the input for the next:

- The output from the gain-to-sustain process is an understanding of the stakeholder environment.
- The output from the investigate-to-invest process is a scan or model of the market.
- The output from the design-to-decide process is the development of the business model and strategy.
- The output from the plan-to-act process is the creation and management of a business plan.
- The output from the analyze-to-adjust process is the maintenance and execution of the business operations.
- The output from the record-to-report process is the collection and receipt of feedback on all levels by measuring business results.

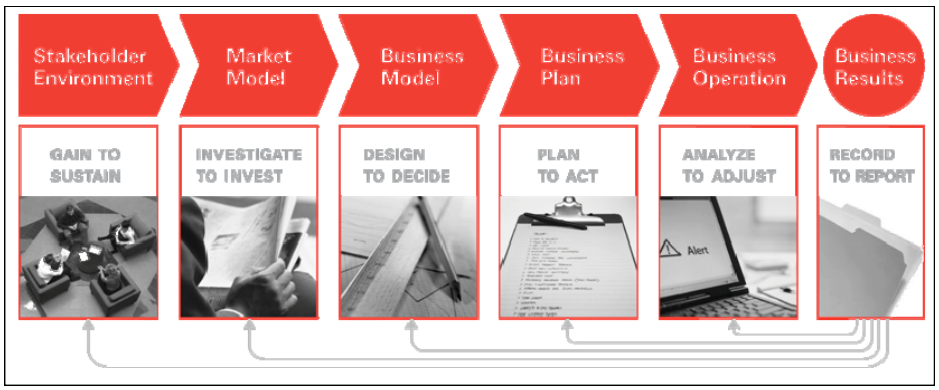

Figure 1. The strategy-to-success framework guides companies towards management excellence.

Transactional processes are standardized, integrated, and automated using enterprise systems. They are deterministic in nature with well-defined processes and outputs. By contrast, management processes deal with uncertainties and a range of possible outputs; they require more flexibility.

By focusing on the management process, the strategy-to-success framework extends the traditional value chain across transactional business processes. However, there is an important difference between transactional processes and management processes. Transactional processes—such as the order-to-cash, procure-to-pay, and hire-to-retire processes—are standardized, integrated, and automated using enterprise resource planning, customer relationship management, and other enterprise systems. They are deterministic in nature with well-defined processes and outputs.

By contrast, management processes deal with uncertainties and a range of possible outputs; they require more flexibility. For example, the decision to invest a marketing budget in advertising must be based on estimates of the impact on revenue. The marketing campaign will likely contribute to overall brand recognition and image, which can increase the value of the company and its products. However, the company cannot know for certain how many potential or existing customers will see the ads and eventually buy something as a result.

The strategy-to-success framework aims to help companies increase organizational efficiency by applying a systematic approach to interconnected management activities. The framework also enhances organizational effectiveness by enabling a better understanding of the impact of business decisions, both within and beyond the enterprise.

The strategy-to-success framework aims to help companies increase organizational efficiency by applying a systematic approach to interconnected management activities.

Figure 2 shows an overview of the six strategy-to-success management processes and identifies the actions that occur within each. The following sections delve into these processes and their related steps.

GAIN TO SUSTAIN	Identify contributions requirements	Bridge conflicting requirements	Align corp strategy with stakeholders	Maximize stakeholder value	Continue stakeholder dialogue
INVESTIGATE TO INVEST	Investigate market dynamics	Assess potential	Match with resources, assets, goals	Define port-folio and position	Invest/ divest
DESIGN TO DECIDE	Create scenarios	Create strategies	Assess Risks	Set aspirational goals	Decide on business model
PLAN TO ACT	Agree on planning framework	Align cross-LOB	Commit	Allocate resources	Experiment continuously
ANALYZE TO ADJUST	Continuously monitor variances	Perform root-cause analysis	Benchmark performance	Identify improvement opportunities	Reforecast
RECORD TO REPORT	Extract data	Transform data	Determine presentation	Share	Moderate dialogue

Figure 2. The processes within the strategy-to-success management framework are composed of multiple steps that bring companies closer to management excellence.

Gain to Sustain: Understand the Stakeholder Environment

The first step in the strategy-to-success framework addresses the stakeholder environment. The gain-to-sustain management process connects corporate strategy with the interests of key stakeholders: employees, customers, suppliers, regulators, society, and investors. Its purpose is to ensure that a company acquires all the necessary contributions from its stakeholders to drive business performance, while at the same time meeting stakeholder expectations.

Gain-to-Sustain Process		
Input	**Best Practice Steps**	**Output**
• Stakeholder analysis. • Analyst reports. • Regulations.	1. Identify key stakeholder contributions and requirements. 2. Align conflicting stakeholder requirements. 3. Align corporate strategy with stakeholder interests. 4. Maximize sustainable stakeholder value. 5. Engage in a continuous stakeholder dialogue and provide continuous feedback.	• Access to capital, resources, assets, and capabilities. • Definition of boundary conditions, strategic constraints. • Stakeholder performance goals.

Table 1. Gain to sustain inputs, process steps, and outputs

Companies must understand each stakeholder's influence and potential impact on the organization, as well as what the organization needs from these stakeholders.

It is important to understand each stakeholder's influence and potential impact on the organization, as well as what the organization needs from these stakeholders. For example, regulators demand compliance and transparency from the organization and, in return, they deliver fair competition. Employees contribute labor, knowledge, experience, motivation, and loyalty in exchange for salary, security, and recognition. Shareholders provide capital and the ability to finance the organization's projects, and they expect a monetary return. After understanding all stakeholder expectations and contributions and aligning any conflicting requirements, the corporate goals and strategies need to be aligned with stakeholder requirements.

Leading organizations engage with their stakeholders in a continuous dialogue and ensure that they receive feedback according to the stated performance goals and metrics. A popular way of structuring this dialogue is called the triple bottom line, consisting of societal, environmental, and economic results (or people, planet, and profit results).

Investigate to Invest: Build a Market Model

The second step in the strategy-to-success framework addresses the market model. The investigate-to-invest management process identifies, evaluates, and creates the most attractive market opportunities for investment. Its purpose is to select strategic alternatives to generate the highest returns. First, the company must decide on which existing markets to focus, which new markets to enter, and from which markets to retract. This process involves combining external information, such as market intelligence and competitive intelligence, with internal analysis of product, service, customer, and geographic performance.

The investigate-to-invest process deals with all aspects of the markets where an organization operates or invests. During this phase, companies first investigate market dynamics and then connect external competitive intelligence with internal business intelligence.

The investigate-to-invest process deals with all aspects of the markets where an organization operates or invests. Using external market intelligence, competitive intelligence, and analysis of internal revenue and contribution margins, the first step is to investigate market dynamics by mapping internal analysis to an external market view.

Investigate-to-Invest Process		
Input	**Best Practice Steps**	**Output**
• Market intelligence. • Competitive intelligence. • Macro-economic statistics. • Resources, assets, capabilities, constraints, external goals.	1. Investigate market dynamics, market drivers and customer segments. 2. Assess the market potential. 3. Match the market potential with resources, capabilities, constraints, and goals. 4. Define market portfolio and competitive position/differentiation. 5. Size investments and divestments in selected target markets.	• Targeted markets (geographies, customer segments, product segments, industries). • Divestment in abandoned markets. • Market projections, drivers and assumptions.

Table 2. Investigate to invest inputs, process steps, and outputs

Typically, these are multidimensional models that define markets by sector, segment, region, channel, and product and service portfolio. Eventually, they include more-detailed attributes such as demographic characteristics. Next, the company can connect this external competitive intelligence with internal business intelligence. What resources does the organization possess that allow it to play a leading role in a certain market? Does the organization have the right skills and capabilities? What are the strategic constraints, such as return on investment hurdles and other opportunity costs? And how is each particular market contributing to the organization's overall goals?

The final step in this process involves finding the most attractive markets. Defining the optimal product and service portfolio for a given customer segment is the goal. The drivers should be clearly defined and their impact on the business understood. This step also includes making divestment decisions that allow the company to move away from markets that are not attractive or will not deliver the expected revenues and margins.

Leading organizations are able to identify the best opportunities by combining internal analysis of their portfolio strength with the dynamics of certain markets to identify differentiators and ultimately create a competitive advantage.

Design to Decide: Develop the Business Model

The third step in the strategy-to-success framework addresses the business model. The design-to-decide management process designs the business infrastructure and partner network that can deliver value to customers in the most profitable way. Its purpose is to select the optimal configuration in connecting the company's value chain. This process involves scenario analysis to determine the best product portfolio; the best business partners and channels; and the best outsourcing, acquisition, and financing strategies.

Design-to-Decide Process		
Input	**Best Practice Steps**	**Output**
• Targeted markets and market projections. • Competitive benchmarking. • Internal performance benchmark. • Partner performance.	1. Create scenarios for alternative future outcomes. 2. Create strategies for addressing these alternative futures and assess applicability of strategies for multiple alternative futures. 3. Perform risk assessment. 4. Set goals and strategic intent. 5. Decide on a business model, including partnerships and acquisitions.	• Business model. • Merger and acquisition targets and partnerships.

Table 3. Design to decide inputs, process steps, and outputs

The design-to-decide process starts with designing scenarios for alternative future outcomes. The company will then be able to evaluate the risks associated with certain business models and understand their impact on the business.

The design-to-decide process starts with designing scenarios for alternative future outcomes. The process combines input from the investigate-to-invest process with internal analysis and performance benchmarks, as well as extended partner network performance. Then, the company will be able to evaluate the risks associated with certain business models and understand their impact on the business. Making the decision to invest in certain partner channels, for example, might deliver higher returns at the expense of increasing dependencies. Time to market is often a crucial aspect for strategic decisions and might inform the decision to merge or acquire versus building a portfolio in-house. Based on these trade-offs, ambitious and aspirational goals can be set and a forward-moving strategy set in motion.

Design to decide ultimately combines the outside-in and inside-out approaches. Market opportunities (outside-in) need to be translated into an executable plan (inside-out). But it is important to remain flexible. The overall goal is to be prepared for any change that might happen, so that the organization can capitalize on new opportunities and resolve issues immediately.

Once the first three processes are performed, an organization will be able to navigate through the enterprise strategy decision tree outlined in Figure 3.

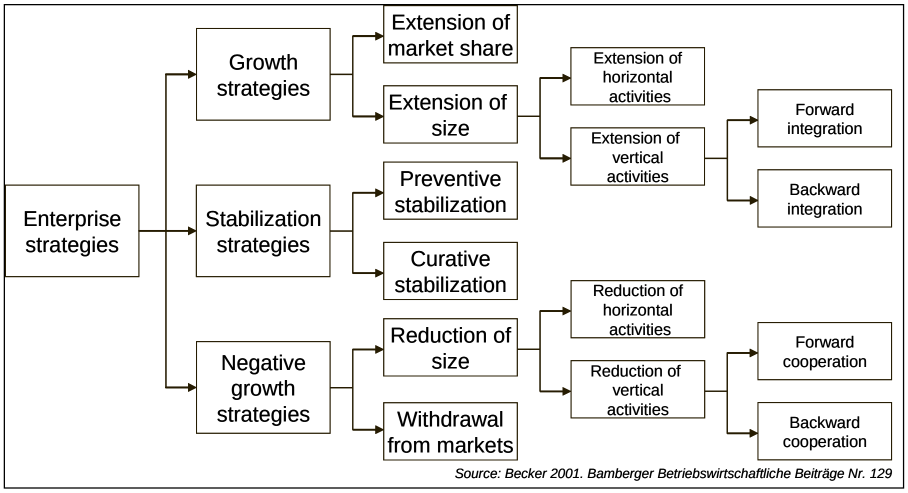

Figure 3: After completing the first three management processes, an organization will have the information needed to navigate the enterprise strategy decision tree.

The enterprise strategy decision tree offers three different strategic options.

- **Growth strategies.** The first path explores the best way to expand in identified, attractive market segments—either by increasing market share with the existing portfolio and business model or by developing new models to expand horizontally or vertically.
- **Stabilization strategies.** The second path includes options to stabilize or consolidate market share. Companies typically implement these strategies to stabilize and protect the existing customer base in a market with few significant changes in demand.
- **Negative growth strategies.** The last path is the opposite of the growth strategies. This strategy involves divesting assets and resources—either by completely moving away from certain market segments or by reducing activities and introducing new business models through outsourcing or partner collaboration.

The decision tree demonstrates the importance of converging the outside-in with the inside-out perspective. One perspective alone is not sufficient.

Plan to Act: Create a Business Plan

The plan-to-act management process aligns the organization with corporate goals. The purpose of this process is to optimally allocate capital and resources across the organization so its strategy can be effectively executed.

The fourth step in the strategy-to-success framework addresses the business plan. The plan-to-act management process aligns the organization with corporate goals. Alignment includes the business units as well as all business functions. The purpose of this process is to optimally allocate capital and resources across the organization so its strategy can be effectively executed. This process involves aligning targets from the strategic to the operational levels, resolving gaps between financial plans and operational constraints, and continuously forecasting to keep the organization on track to meet its goals.

Plan-to-Act Process		
Input	**Best Practice Steps**	**Output**
• Business model. • Stakeholder requirements. • Long-term and short-term goals.	1. Agree on an enterprisewide planning framework. 2. Align resources and activities across business functions. 3. Commit managers to short-term goals. 4. Efficiently allocate resources. 5. Test and experiment continuously for better ways to reach goals.	• Short-term targets, aligned across organization. • Drivers. • Constraints. • Assumptions. • Executable plans and budgets.

Table 4. Plan to act inputs, process steps, and outputs

In preparation, management assesses the feasibility of how stakeholder requirements, assumptions about the target market, and business model objectives can be transformed into executable goals for the organization. The team must analyze risks, review investments, and evaluate finance options. Based on the projections of potential outcomes and results in different operational scenarios, the organization will identify constraints, gaps, and drivers. All planning activity must then fit into this framework.

Organizations must also prepare contingency plans for potential deviations, such as higher than expected demand. If production capacity cannot scale with an increase in demand, the outcome (not enough units) could have negative repercussions for the company. For example, one of the leading car manufacturers in Germany recently released a new SUV model. Within a few months, the entire planned production capacity for the first year was sold. Undoubtedly, this was a profitable business decision in the short term. But if demand exceeded all previously planned scenarios and there were no reasonable alternatives to increasing the number of units produced, buyers might choose to buy from a competitor.

Based on the company's strategic goals, management performs a number of financial and operational planning cycles in parallel. It evaluates constraints, optimizes planning models and structures, and assigns targets across the organization. The resulting plans are distributed to all decision-makers and later collected, consolidated, and analyzed for gaps or deviations. Finally, the organization allocates resources and commits to the budgets and its goals. These actions result in internal alignment.

Many organizations have started to move away from fixed periodic budgets and are adopting rolling budgeting and forecasting activities. This is an important step toward increasing agility.

In today's business performance networks, this commitment can only be achieved when plans are shared with business partners. For this reason, many organizations have started to move away from fixed periodic budgets and are adopting rolling budgeting and forecasting activities. This is an important step toward increasing agility. Companies not only react to changes, but they are also able to drive change. Organizations should continuously look into different and better ways to drive business performance. Ultimately, the plan-to-act process helps organizations "stick to reality," instead of "sticking to the plan."

Analyze to Adjust: Monitor Business Operations

The analyze-to-adjust management process monitors the business and analyzes deviations from a company's goals to take corrective action. The purpose of this process is to detect variances between plans and execution, analyze the causes and trends of these variances, and determine the best-possible response.

The fifth step in the strategy-to-success framework addresses business operations. The analyze-to-adjust management process monitors the business and analyzes deviations from a company's goals in order to take corrective action. Its purpose is to detect variances between plans and execution, analyze the causes and trends of these variances, and determine the best-possible response. Depending on the magnitude of the impact, this process can involve actions ranging from immediate tactical response—such as changing a customer's credit status—to adjusting the business plan or even reevaluating the strategy.

Analyze-to-Adjust Process		
Input	**Best Practice Steps**	**Output**
• Short-term targets. • Drivers. • Constraints. • Assumptions. • Actual and historic performance.	1. Continuously monitor variances. 2. Perform root-cause analysis across business domains. 3. Benchmark performance against external and internal peer groups. 4. Identify opportunities for improvement. 5. Adjust forecast and resource alignment.	• New forecast. • Improvement activities.

Table 5. Analyze to adjust inputs, process steps, and outputs

Using the analytical models an organization has developed, management must monitor variances continuously, performing root-cause analysis to understand the underlying driver of the variance. The team can then choose to identify opportunities to improve the situation or adjust the current forecast.

Depending on the significance of the deviation, managers might need to realign budgets or reallocate resources. It is also possible that a tactical change could address the variance. In that case, a tight integration between management processes and operational processes can help the organization switch quickly from analysis to action.

The analyze-to-adjust process is crucial to ensuring continuous vertical and horizontal alignment across the organization. All of its current operational activities need to be compared to the previously committed plans, budgets, goals, and targets. Typically, tactical forecasts are used as an intermediary layer for these adjustments. Leading companies establish this alignment by integrating different analytical processes with each other.

Root-cause analysis and improvement activities often involve more than one part of the organization. Consider, for example, the finance department detecting an increase in days sales outstanding. At the same time, the marketing department might see a spike in customer complaints. Perhaps the root cause is the procurement department trying to improve working capital by paying out certain suppliers later, leading to product and service delivery issues. The improvement activity would consist of introducing working capital management that is integrated across the enterprise.

Root-cause analysis requires alignment across different functions of the extended enterprise so that management can understand how deviations in one process are related to issues in other processes.

Record to Report: Deliver Business Results

The record-to-report management process provides strategic, financial, and operational feedback about how a business is performing.

The final step in the strategy-to-success framework addresses business results. The record-to-report management process provides strategic, financial, and operational feedback about how a business is performing. This process involves collecting, transforming, and delivering relevant, timely, and accurate information to stakeholders inside and outside the organization. Such feedback provides insight into whether stakeholder expectations have been met.

Record-to-Report Process		
Input	**Best Practice Steps**	**Output**
• Actual and historic data from all internal systems. • Relevant data collected from external sources.	1. Extract data from transactional systems. 2. Comply with local and international accounting standards. 3. Transform data into meaningful strategic, financial, and operational performance indicators for each step in the strategy-to-success framework. 4. Determine the best way of presenting information, based on type of performance indicator, users' personal preferences, and security requirements. 5. Share results with appropriate internal and external stakeholders in a complete, accurate, and timely fashion. 6. Moderate stakeholder dialogue.	• Reports. • Scorecards. • Dashboards. • Gadgets. • Performance indicators and metrics for every step in the strategy-to-success framework.

Table 6. Record to report inputs, process steps, and outputs

Every time an organization goes through the strategy-to-success cycle, it needs to learn from the experience. Accordingly, the strategy-to-success process is not complete without feedback. Successful organizations put performance indicators in place to provide that feedback at every level of the strategy-to-success process.

Operational management needs real-time information. Business planners need performance variance analysis; strategists need feedback on progress toward overall goals and on actual performance in comparison to the overall market. All stakeholders benefit from seeing how their contributions are recognized and their requirements are met.

As one of the most well-defined processes in the strategy-to-success cycle, the record-to-report process might seem simple, but it requires considerable effort. It is the only process scrutinized by outside auditors who draw conclusions about the control mechanisms in place during the financial close and reporting cycle. As such, all parts of an organization need to be involved.

STRATEGY-TO-SUCCESS IN ACTION

The strategy-to-success framework offers a way for an organization to determine which of its management processes can be improved and which can already be considered best practices.

Strategy to success is a reference framework for an organization's management processes. Although management processes might look different within every organization, most are likely based on the same principles we outline in this paper. The strategy-to-success framework offers a way for an organization to determine which of its management processes can be improved and which can already be considered best practices.

In optimizing management processes, it is important to keep in mind that there are some differences between management processes and transactional business processes. Unlike transactional processes, management processes are more iterative in nature and often run in parallel. The following case studies show how management processes are implemented.

Case Study: New Product Development

A telecommunications provider is introducing a new product, an effort that involves innovation and development processes as well as management processes.

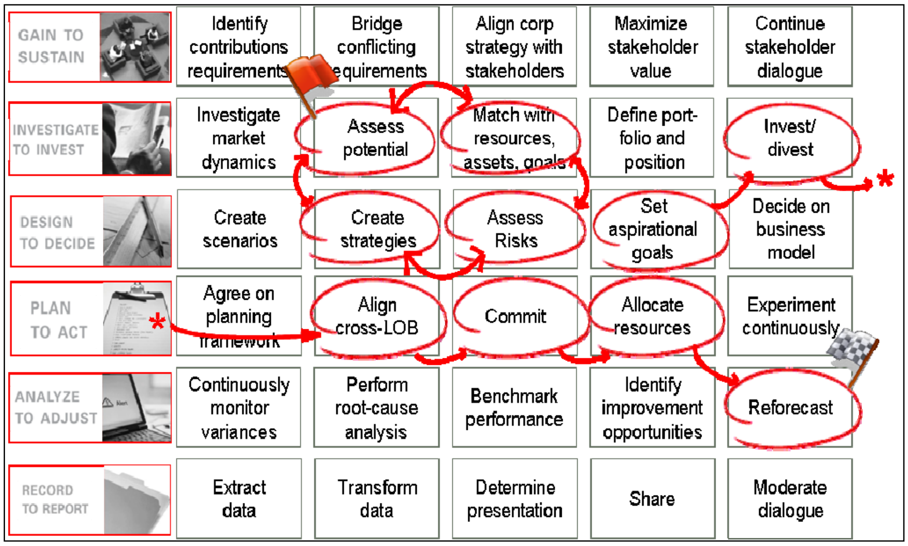

Figure 4: This illustrates the management processes involved in new product introduction.

In this case, the management process starts with assessing the market potential. This is an iterative process that involves risk assessment—creating alternative go-to-market strategies and matching each strategy with internal resources, assets, and goals. Once a company has identified the best option, it sets long-term goals for the new product and begins to invest. After the investment (or possibly just before), the relevant lines of business align their operational plans for introducing the product to help ensure success. After the lines of business reach consensus, management teams commit to the plan and allocate resources. The new product will affect the plans for the year, so the company creates a new forecast.

Let's contrast this process to the steps that would occur if a competitor introduced a new product. In reacting to such an event, a company would take many of the same actions; however, the situation would be much less controlled. Instead of assessing the potential and creating strategies, the company would focus its management processes on investigating the market dynamics to assess the threat and creating scenarios for alternate responses. Different situations require different layouts of the management processes.

Case Study: Process Interruption

A railway operation is experiencing problems with the communication system in its main hub. This will undoubtedly lead to significant delays and a disruption of the day's complete timetable. The problem needs to be solved as quickly as possible.

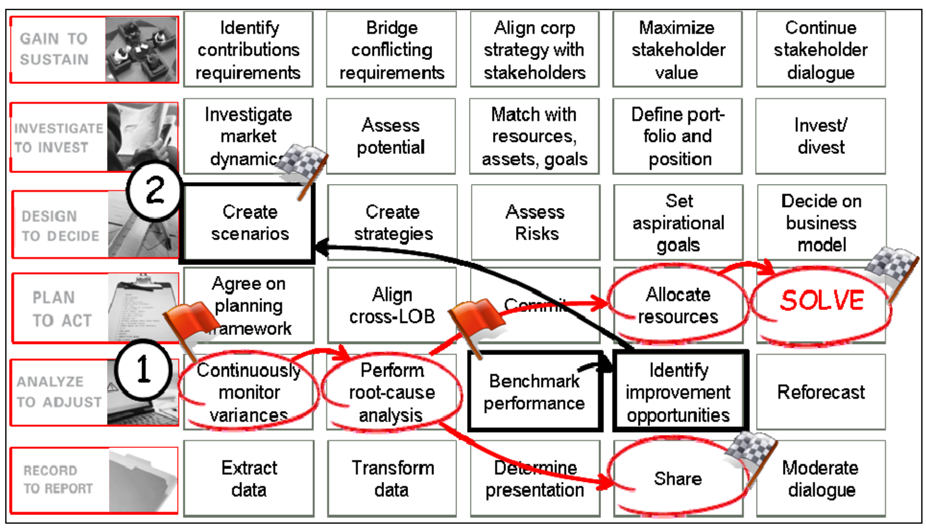

Figure 5: This illustrates the management processes involved in correcting a process interruption.

Immediately after the operational management processes detect the problem, the railway operation needs to identify where the problem lies and what to do about it. With no time to waste, resources need to be allocated right away. At the same time, passengers in all trains and in the station need to be notified and updated every few minutes. There is no time for discussing how this could have happened; the problem needs to be solved.

After the immediate crisis is resolved, a second step can occur. Management can discuss what happened. Was the problem an anomaly or does the operational data indicate it will happen again? Has this happened in other train stations, and, if so, how did they deal with it? The company will evaluate the steps taken to solve the problem and learn how to respond faster and more effectively if the problem reoccurs. The company might also update its emergency playbook to capture the new insights.

STRATEGY-TO-SUCCESS CALL TO ACTION

Once you have embraced the mandate to achieve management excellence, the question becomes how to define management processes within your own organization. Start by asking and answering the strategic questions in Table 6. These questions help explore how your organization performs the various processes that determine how business is managed. You'll begin to identify gaps and constraints and develop a path to align your management processes.

Management Process from the Strategy-to-Success Framework	Call to Action
Gain to sustain: understand the stakeholder environment	• Do you know what your stakeholders require? Are you effectively managing the trade-offs between conflicting stakeholders (employees, partners, shareholders, customers, society)? • Are investor interests aligned with your business? • Do you systematically evaluate all societal, governmental and macroeconomic drivers that potentially impact your business?
Investigate to invest: build a market model	• Have you identified all potential market opportunities? • Who will be your main competitors three to five years from now? • How do you assess the full range of outcomes for your potential investments? • How do you predict the probability of success or failure of new initiatives? • Do you understand revenue and profitability by product line, customer segment, market, and channel? • Have you fully evaluated the performance of your value chain?
Design to decide: develop the business model	• How good are you at assessing strategic options? • Does your product portfolio have the right mix of mature, midstage, and new

Management Process from the Strategy-to-Success Framework	Call to Action
	products/services to sustain your organization? • Do you have the capabilities needed to enter new markets? • What business models should you consider for new markets? • Do you fully understand short- and long-term cash flow requirements? • What risks are associated with new market opportunities?
Plan to act: create a business plan	• Are strategic goals linked to financial budgets and operational plans? • How will you analyze the causes behind variances? • How will you update your plans and budgets to reflect changes in the market and business environment?
Analyze to adjust: monitor business operations	• How satisfied are your users with the timeliness and usefulness of management reporting? • How do you proactively alert stakeholders of critical issues? • Does your company have a standard set of key performance indicators (KPIs) by which to measure and manage performance? Are the KPIs in use leading or lagging indicators? • Does your company have a common data model or master data repository? Are all systems using consistent definitions?
Record to report: deliver business results	• Does your company have multiple charts of accounts across business units and systems? • How do you perform intraperiod tracking of cost center spending, billing and collections, and purchasing and payables? • Are external stakeholders satisfied with your financial and nonfinancial disclosures? Are you reporting environmental and social metrics? • How do you handle filings with regulatory bodies? How can you streamline this process?

Table 6: These questions help you to ask the right questions during each management process.

CONCLUSION

Oracle's strategy-to-success framework describes a set of six management processes that lead organizations to become smarter, more agile, and better aligned. Companies implementing the framework apply a systematic approach to management activities and increase managerial and operational effectiveness. They gain a better understanding of the impact of business decisions. However, management processes differ from operational or transactional processes. As the case studies showed, management processes require flexibility because they deal with uncertainties and can result in a range of outcomes. Using the strategy-to-success framework as a guide, your company will well be on its way toward establishing the best practice processes that lead to management excellence.

APPENDIX

This white paper is one of a series of recent papers that describe the goal of management excellence and introduce a process for achieving it. The following titles, including this one, can be found at the white papers link on oracle.com/epm (or directly at oracle.com/solutions/business_intelligence/resource-library-whitepapers.html).

- *Management Excellence: How Tomorrow's Leaders Will Get Ahead* explains why management excellence is so important and explores the business drivers that have made reaching this goal an organizational imperative.
- *Management Excellence: The Metrics Reloaded* identifies the relevant performance indicators to measure management excellence.
- *Management Excellence: Techniques and Technologies* describes the capabilities of an enterprise performance management system that supports management excellence.

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