"I put your creative and flexible system to work and got results right away. Thanks for the insights."
—Gary G. Lo, Regional Finance & Information Management Director, Johnson & Johnson Vision Care, Asia Pacific Division

"If a road map's worth is measured not solely by your arrival, but also the confidence by which you travel, then this is a priceless map to organizational success. Using this has unleashed motivation and generated company-wide optimism that surpassed our expectations. This is one road map you should not travel without."
—David Skinner, President, Holiday Group

"Terry brings his dynamic presentation style to an innovative project planning book that makes a traditionally boring but critical subject come alive."
—Donald S. Remer, PhD, PE, Oliver C. Field Professor of Engineering, Harvey Mudd College

"Logical, systematic, and quick tools for making better decisions in business and life."
—Dr. Boonmark Sirinaovakul, Associate Professor, Assistant President, Rangsit University, Thailand

"This approach gave our planners, managers and analysts the tools and insight to successfully redirect a major process reengineering effort taking place in a rapidly changing IT landscape."
—Michael J. Greenhalgh, Supervisor, Sacramento Municipal Utility District

"Strategic management can be a very dry subject. However, true masters can turn this dry topic into a most enlightening and highly usable management tool. Terry is one such rare master. You would be wise to read his book and even wiser to attend his course."
—Regent B.H. Khor, Senior Marketing Officer, JTC Corporation, Government of Singapore

"Your Strategic Project Management tools are powerful resources all responsible managers should have in their arsenal."
—David Lam, IT Director, Stephen S. Wise School

# STRATEGIC PROJECT MANAGEMENT MADE SIMPLE

## PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR LEADERS AND TEAMS

TERRY SCHMIDT

WILEY
John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey.
Published simultaneously in Canada.



ISBN: 978-0470-41158-2

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

*To Mom, who taught me to think;*
*to Dad, who inspired me to take action;*
*and to my Sweetheart as well.*

# 3

# Introducing the Logical Framework

*Make no little plans: they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably will, themselves, not be realized. Make big plans: aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram, once recorded, will not die.*

—Daniel H. Burnham, American architect and urban planner (1846–1912)

## The Best Solutions Tool You'll Ever Find

In the 1970s, I worked with an innovative management consulting firm called Practical Concepts Incorporated (PCI), whose visionary founder Leon Rosenberg first developed the Logical Framework, to help the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) more effectively plan, implement, and evaluate the thousands of projects in the U.S. government's multi-billion dollar foreign aid program.

The LogFrame has since been widely adopted by the international donor agencies of Great Britain, Canada, Australia, Denmark,





and Germany. Parts of the World Bank and the United Nations. Several U.S. federal agencies (such as the Center for Disease Control) have adopted their own versions; some call it Logic Model.

My career mission is to expand the use of this methodology to corporate and technical arenas, through consulting, public seminars, and in-house workshops.

Private sector use is rapidly growing. Among our clients, Sony Electronics' TQM Black Belts found the tool valuable for internal consulting and quality improvement projects. DirecTV used the LogFrame approach to fight identity theft and turn high profile fraud cases over to the FBI. The Los Angeles County Assessor's office chose this approach for integrated planning to improve cross-department processes.

Application possibilities for the LogFrame are endless. Civic, voluntary and social organizations benefit from these same organizing principles. A New Mexico motorcycle club plans their annual children's toy runs this way. Girl Scout troops organize fund-raising campaigns. Churches develop after-school teen drop-in centers.

I first learned the power of systems thinking while coaching project teams in developing countries to design social and economic development projects. Working to solve difficult problems in complicated situations taught me to recognize the interconnection of issues and address them from a systems thinking perspective. The LogFrame makes that easy to do.

For example, a project to improve child mortality in Africa, may focus on nutritional education for mothers, but success also demands access to clean water and decent sanitation. *Strategy is all about managing webs of relationships.*

These projects typically dealt with hard-to-measure intangibles such as strengthening institutional performance, upgrading manpower skills, and changing cultural attitudes for the better. Your own projects may also involve processes, intangibles, and changes—tough topics to put your finger on. Bar charts cannot capture such intangibles, but the LogFrame does.

My greatest personal satisfaction comes from seeing my clients use what I teach them long after I depart from places like Thailand, which played an important role in refining these concepts. I was part of the original PCI team that trained Royal Thai

Government employees at the National Economic and Social Development Board.

Program attendees held senior government leadership positions, and many adopted the LogFrame as their way of doing business. The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration used LogFrame planning to move the world's largest outdoor marketplace—with nearly 15,000 vendors selling everything imaginable—to its new location at Jathujak. Dr. Sudjit Nimatkul, a program participant, applied these methods in his subsequent role as Governor of Phuket.

Many years later, I moved to Asia full-time to assist project teams responsible for executing USAID-funded projects. That's where I refined the RAP (Rapid Action Planning) process to develop impactful project plans which reflect on-the-ground reality and team dynamics.

I eventually went on to start my own consulting company and shifted my client base to corporations, government agencies, and research institutions. It soon became obvious that the challenges and issues they faced benefitted from using the same system thinking perspective.

Once you understand the inner workings of the LogFrame, you can better understand the interconnection of elements that comprise your project system, and manage it more effectively.

## Systems Thinking: Conceptual Foundation of the Logical Framework

While the LogFrame matrix may initially seem intimidating, the ideas it captures are basic. The four strategic questions offer a user friendly way to learn and apply this tool. These questions are inherently embedded in the matrix and answering them helps you design your project in a way that connects all the dots.

The Logical Framework structure shown on page 45 appears as a 4×4 matrix. Each cell in the matrix organizes project information in a specific way, using standard management terminology. The various cells relate to each other by interlocking principles of good management and common sense. The cells interact—changes in one can affect the others—reflecting the dynamics of our thinking process and the complexity of the issues before us. The completed matrix can



communicate a complicated project clearly and understandably on a couple of sheets of paper.

At first glance, the LogFrame looks like a bunch of connected boxes. But a closer examination reveals multiple types of thinking woven into the matrix logic. In this next section, you will see how the LogFrame invites, accommodates, and incorporates other best practice management disciplines.

### Integrating Theory and Best Practice

The *Systems Thinking* perspective built into the LogFrame architecture recognizes that every project is part of a larger system, and we must understand how that larger system affects our effort. System thinking prevents the "elephant parts" problem.

*Strategic Planning* teaches us to begin with the end Objectives in mind, scan the environment, and systematically work backwards to develop our strategy.

*Management by Objectives* (as well as *Management by Results*) reminds us that Objectives exist at multiple levels and that they all need clear Measures of success to make them meaningful. The LogFrame requires separate success Measures for Goal, Purpose, and Outcomes, along with means of Verification.

*The Scientific Method* allows us to formulate any project as a series of linked If-Then hypotheses. Thus, every project can be considered to be a structured experiment, where implementation tests the validity of our educated guess hypotheses. (See the Implementation Equation™ on page 55).

*Total Quality Management* offers more specific tools for measuring Objectives and specifying the degree of quality required. This concept shows up in multiple cells.

*Project Management* provides the necessary body of knowledge to convert Inputs into Outcomes. The LogFrame puts project management tools in their proper place, to support Purpose and Goal Objectives.

Finally, *Team Building* occurs as a by-product when people use these tools together. It's remarkable how much real work gets done when people gather around a wall-sized grid or use collaborative LogFrame software to flesh out a design they all contribute to and mutually own.

Virtually any valid business methodology can be smoothly incorporated in the LogFrame structure. For example, the data for Return on Investment (ROI) analysis comes from estimating the economic value of the Purpose and Goal level achievement. Figure 3.1 shows the LogFrame matrix, and Figure 3.2 gives definitions of terms used in the LogFrame.

For small- and medium-sized projects, this may be the only planning tool you'll need. For projects of any size, this tool is the ideal starting point to help your team get going quickly and confidently as well as to build an iterative planning and implementation mindset.

## Tackling the Four Critical Strategic Questions

The LogFrame captures, in various cells, the answers to the Four Critical Strategic Questions:

1. **What Are We Trying To Accomplish And Why? (Objectives)**
   The first column describes Objectives and the If-Then logic linking them together. The LogFrame makes important distinctions among various "levels" of Objectives: Strategic intention (Goal), project impact (Purpose), project deliverables (Outcomes), and the key action steps (Inputs).
2. **How Will We Measure Success? (Measures and Verifications)**
   The second column identifies the Measures of success for Objectives at each level. Here we select appropriate Measures and choose quantity, quality, and time indicators to clarify what each Objective means.

   The third column summarizes how we will verify the status of the Measures at each level. Think of the Verification column as the project's management information and feedback system.



| *Objectives* | *Success Measures* | *Verification* | *Assumptions* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Goal* | | | |
| *Purpose* | | | |
| *Outcomes* | | | |
| *Inputs* | | | |

**FIGURE 3.1** The LogFrame Matrix

| *Objectives* | *Success Measures* | *Verification* | *Assumptions* |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***Goal:*** ▸ Big Picture Objective to which Project Purpose contributes | ***Goal Measures:*** Measures of Goal Achievement (quality, quantity, time) | Data sources to monitor and verify Goal | ***To reach Goal:*** External conditions needed to reach Goal and beyond |
| ***Purpose:*** ▸ Change expected from producing Outcomes ▸ Motivation for Project | ***Purpose Measures:*** Success conditions expected at end of Project (quality, quantity, time) | Data sources to monitor and verify Purpose | ***To achieve Purpose:*** External conditions needed to achieve Purpose |
| ***Outcomes:*** ▸ Specific Results expected from Project Team ▸ What good managers can make happen | ***Outcome Measures:*** Description of completed Outcomes (quality, quantity, time) | Data sources to monitor and verify Outcomes | ***To produce Outcomes:*** External conditions needed to produce Outcomes |
| ***Inputs:*** ▸ Activities and Responsibilities needed to produce Outcomes | ***Input Measures:*** Resource Budget and Schedule | Data sources to monitor and verify Inputs | ***To obtain and manage Inputs:*** External conditions necessary to obtain and manage Inputs |

**FIGURE 3.2** Definitions of Terms Used in the LogFrame

3. **What Other Conditions Must Exist? (Assumptions)**
   The fourth column captures Assumptions; those ever-present, but often neglected risk factors outside of the project, on which project success depends. Defining and testing Assumptions lets you spot potential problems and deal with them in advance.
4. **How Do We Get There? (Inputs)**
   The bottom row captures the project action plan: Who does what, when, and with what resources. Conventional project management tools like Work Breakdown Structures (WBS) and Gantt chart schedules fit here.

## Grab a Front-Row Workshop Seat

Welcome to my workshop! Can a hands-on strategy workshop itself be considered a project? Absolutely. Workshops include all the elements of any project, including specific Objectives, defined timeframe, limited resources, new cast of players, and uncertainty. Mine have earned a reputation for being innovative because they center around the LogFrame and my "entertraining" style engages everyone as a contributor and participant in the process. As we proceed, you'll become convinced that the LogFrame is not a form to fill out, but a systematic thinking template that lets you logically design projects by asking, and intelligently answering, the four critical questions.

### 1. What Are We Trying to Accomplish and Why?

As you wrestle with this question, you may have written scopes of work, executive memos, or strategic plans to guide you. At other times, you start from scratch with a blank sheet of paper.

When I toss out this question at the start of my workshop, common responses include "Learn how to manage projects better," or "Learn how to meet Objectives," or occasionally, "Keep my boss from meddling." The common denominator of the various responses is "learning."

Most of the responses address the *what* part of the question, so I challenge them to answer the *why* part. Then I typically get statements like "Deliver successful projects" or "Improve my projects." So I diagram this If-Then linkage on a flip-chart pad, as shown in Figure 3.3.



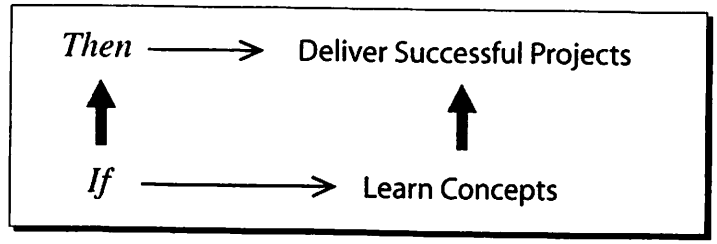


**FIGURE 3.3** If-Then Grid

Does this If-Then logic make sense: If we learn the concepts, then we will deliver successful projects? Sure. This relationship is certainly logical, but the gap between these two Objectives seems too large— like rungs on a ladder that are spaced too far apart for safe climbing. Learning concepts won't necessarily deliver successful projects. I then ask my audience, "Is something missing? Does something else need to happen between learning and project success? What in-between Objective would make the linkages more logical?"

After some furrowed brows, they slap their foreheads in an *ah-ha* moment and exclaim, "Why, of course. We need to *apply* the concepts!" Exactly!

Inserting this intermediate Objective makes the If-Then logic more, well, *logical.* Our hypothesis becomes what is shown in Figure 3.4.

Inserting this intermediate Objective adds realism to our hypotheses and directs attention to the critical, after-workshop Objective that's necessary for successful projects. *Apply* now becomes the aiming point for designing and delivering a workshop that participants can, and will, put into action.

The Objective "Learn key concepts" requires a lower-level Objective describing workshop learning tasks and activities. The phrase "Conduct the workshop" will suffice for now. We'll break this out into specific tasks and schedule during Question #4.

Remember that every project under the sun is comprised of multiple Objectives. The Logical Framework tool helps distinguish these multiple Objectives, which show up at different levels in the cause-effect chain. The LogFrame organizes them into four separate and distinct levels, each with precise definitions. After applying these definitions, our strategic hypothesis looks as illustrated in Figure 3.5.

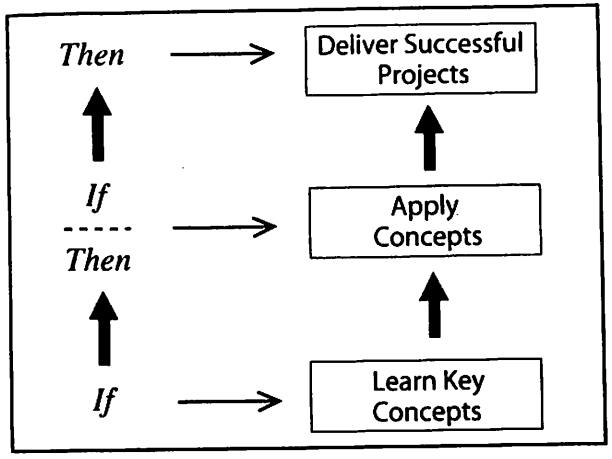


**FIGURE 3.4** Logical If-Then Grid

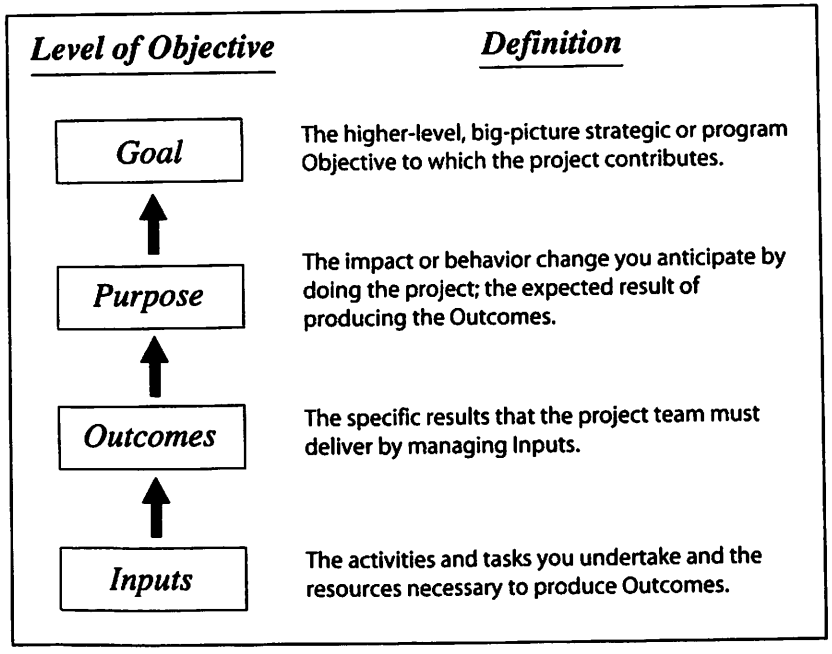


**FIGURE 3.5** Strategic Hypothesis



Reading from bottom-up:

- *If* I conduct the workshop, *then* participants will learn key concepts;
- *If* participants learn key concepts, *then* they will apply them;
- *If* they apply concepts, *then* they'll deliver successful projects.

We've now constructed a first-cut of a four-level strategic hypothesis—the backbone of any project. Note how these "vertical" logical linkages start with Input activities and percolate up to higher-level Goals. You must climb up each rung in the ladder step-by-step, without jumping over any rungs.

Another important distinction is how this strategic hypothesis clearly distinguishes between Outcomes (the learning that happens during the workshop); Purpose (what occurs after the "project"—participants *apply* concepts learned); and Goal (the operational benefit expected from the training—better projects). Strictly speaking, Inputs are not Objectives. Rather, they are the tasks necessary to accomplish Objectives. These definitions are illustrated in Figure 3.6.

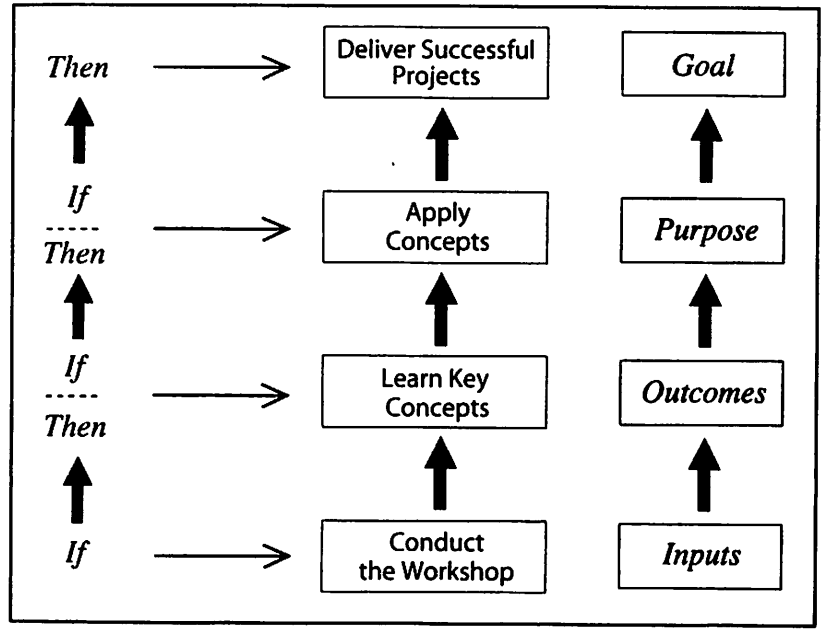


**FIGURE 3.6** The Various Levels of Objectives

The value of this kind of thinking for your undertaking should be this evident, which makes it possible to test whether our project hypotheses hang together and connect to business goals. If-Then logic dissolves fuzzy thinking like morning fog evaporating under the stern gaze of the risen sun.

### 2. How Will We Measure Success?

Objectives, by nature, are ambiguous. They become crystal clear only when those involved agree how to measure them.

Each level of the LogFrame invites Success Measures which express how to recognize the successful accomplishment of each Objective. Success Measures consist of sentences, phrases, or bullet points that clarify exactly what each Objective means. These metrics describe, in advance, the conditions that you expect will exist when you declare the Objectives achieved. They should spell out Quality, Quantity, and Time—the three most frequent measurement dimensions:

- *Quantity*—How many/how much?
- *Quality*—How good? What standards or performance specifications?
- *Time*—By when or for how long?

In addition to these "QQT" categories, two other categories may come into play:

- *Customer*—Who are the customers/clients/users/beneficiaries?
- *Cost*—What resources are required?

Think of the LogFrame's Verification column as a summary of the project's MIS (Management Information System).

The Verification column defines the formal and informal data sources and methods necessary to track how well Measures have been (or are being) achieved validate the Measures. Typical means of Verification include physical observations, project team meetings, reports, survey results, analyses, tests, and/or whatever else confirms that the Measure has been met.

Let's add Measures to our workshop example, starting at the Goal and working top-down. As we proceed, notice how the interaction among the LogFrame elements enriches comprehension of how to make the project work.



#### *Goal Measures*

I encourage my attendees to define how they will measure the Goal "deliver successful projects." The usual responses that get mentioned are delivering on-time, within budget, and with quality. Reduction in problems encountered is an additional Success Measure, and all these are easily verified through project schedules and financial records. We then insert Goal Measures and Means of Verification into the LogFrame grid shown on page 53.

#### *Purpose Measures*

Purpose level Measures are the most essential of all because they describe the behavioral changes or conditions we aim for by delivering Outcomes. Purpose Measures describe *project success*, while Outcome Measures only describe *project completion*—an important distinction that is often lost.

I ask workshop participants to spell out Success Measures for the Purpose statement "Participants apply concepts after workshop." Let's get clear, "How many participants?"; What does "apply" mean?; and define "When?" and "How well?" In small work groups, they come up with possible QQT Measures like these:

- *Quantity?* They decide that at least 80 percent of participants is a reasonable figure.
- *Time?* They agree that within six weeks after the workshop is a reasonable timeframe. They also add a second six-month Measure to track the sustainability of the knowledge application over time.
- *Quality?* Quality, in this case, refers to specific after-workshop behaviors, such as briefing the boss, sharing workshop products, or using the tools on additional projects.

At the same time you define Measures, choose appropriate means of verifying them. If you cannot come up with good verifiers, the Measure needs to be modified.

#### *Outcome Measures*

Outcomes are defined as those deliverables your project team commits to make happen. Think of Outcomes as project scope, and Outcome Measures as performance specifications which spell out what the completed deliverables will look like. It's normally easier to visualize

Outcome Measures than Purpose Measures because Outcomes are usually more tangible. For example, the Outcome "Participants learn concepts" could be measured with, "By the end of the workshop, 90 percent of participants can apply the four strategic questions and define logical If-Then hierarchies."

Set your Outcome targets with an eye on your desired Purpose and its associated Measures. Target these at the magnitudes needed to achieve the Purpose-level impact you are aiming for. For example, if you only have 20 percent of people apply the concepts, it would not be necessary for 90 percent to learn them. Changes in the Purpose Measures affect the Outcome Measures, which is another example of interconnection between concepts in the LogFrame cell and how changes in one may affect others.

This dynamic and interactive interplay both, horizontally and vertically, promotes the disciplined thinking that creates superior projects. Give this thinking process the attention it deserves. By remembering NASA Rule #15 and using the LogFrame upfront, you'll avoid logjams down the line.

Now our project LogFrame looks like Figure 3.7 on page 53.

### *Input Measures*

With Outcome Measures in place, Inputs and Input Measures (as discussed later) will begin to fall into place. Keep in mind that multiple outside factors will influence your projects, which is why the third question is also critical.

## 3. What Other Conditions Must Exist?

No project is a sure bet, even a workshop. Risk factors always exist, whether or not we recognize them. Most teams don't delve deeply enough into defining and testing their Assumptions at the start to surface the inherent risks. Assumptions are those uncertain factors which are necessary to complete the logical linkages, but which may be beyond the direct control of the project team. While we can ignore Assumptions, we cannot ignore the impact of ignoring these Assumptions.

Workshop participants form small groups again to identify the key Assumptions that link each pair of Objectives. We start by discussing what Assumptions are necessary to go from the Input



| Objectives | Success Measures | Verification |
|---|---|---|
| **Goal**<br>Deliver successful projects. | **Goal Measures:**<br>Within next year:<br>1. Key project Objectives reached on time, within budget, and at required performance level.<br>2. Fewer problems due to ineffective planning or road blocks that could have been anticipated during planning (e.g., killer Assumptions). | 1. Schedule and financial records<br>2. Project logs |
| **Purpose**<br>Participants apply what they learned following workshop. | **Purpose Measures:**<br>1. Within six weeks after training, 80% of participants have:<br>• completed project designs they began during workshop<br>• shared learning highlights with boss and team<br>• explained selected course concepts to others<br>• prepared a LogFrame for additional projects<br>• scheduled in-house training or Rapid Action Planning (RAP) workshop<br>• adapted selected concepts/tools to enrich their current approach<br>2. After six months, all participants' project plans have clear Objectives, Measures, Assumptions; all participants are using team process and involving key stakeholders in design. | 1. Follow-up evaluation after six weeks<br>2. Evaluation after six months |
| **Outcomes:**<br>Participants learn key concepts and tools during workshop. | **Outcome Measures:**<br>1.1 At workshop end, >90% of participants can correctly:<br>• identify and apply 4 key questions<br>• identify LogFrame terms, set QQT Measures<br>• construct logical *If-Then* hierarchies<br>• identify and evaluate Assumptions<br>1.2 All teams develop an acceptable LogFrame for a case study in class within two hours.<br>1.3 LogFrame adds strategic value to participant thinking; all walk away with expanded capacity. | 1.1 In-class exercises, formal tests<br>1.2 LogFrame passes checklist<br>1.3 Ask participants |

**FIGURE 3.7** Partial Workshop LogFrame

activity "Conduct the class" to the Outcome "Apply the concepts." They typically identify such Assumptions as:

1. Participants are motivated to learn.
2. Instructor is competent to teach.

Further discussion enriches these initial Assumptions to become:

1. Participants want to attend, are motivated, and open to learning.
2. Instructor is effective with this group.

Note this iterative thinking process that applies to all parts of the LogFrame. First-stab answers get you going, but as you proceed, you'll come up with fine-tune phrasing that more precisely expresses your project intentions.

Examining Assumptions can be intimidating, and in some circles it is discouraged as "negative thinking" or "not our job." Many otherwise intelligent people are content with only dipping a toe into the Assumptions pool and quickly moving on, rather than diving in and swimming around.

Now let's identify the Outcome to Purpose Assumptions, those factors necessary to go from learning to post-workshop application.

1. Participants have the opportunity to apply concepts in their jobs.
2. Participants' bosses and organizational environments support and encourage application of concepts.
3. Participants can remember materials well enough to apply them.

To get from Purpose to Goal, we must assume conditions like:

1. Concepts are relevant—they work in practice and add high value.
2. The organization and its environment are reasonably stable.

### *Assumptions Complete the Hypothesis*

Since Assumptions shine a bright light on possible pitfalls in our climb up the hierarchy, the benefit of spotting them early should be immediately apparent. Better to catch these potential deal-breakers



upfront and decide how to handle them then rather than pay lip-service and have them sabotage you later.

Note that the concept of Assumptions forces us to expand our original hypotheses to reflect uncertainties in our logic chain. The enriched logic becomes "*If* / AND / *Then*" logic, as diagrammed in Figure 3.8.

### *Examine Your Strategic Hypothesis*

This leads us to the core idea that distinguishes exceptional leaders and teams I have known from the rest of the crowd. The very best intuitively grasp and manage what I call *The Implementation Equation*™. This equation adds real-world realism by inviting Assumptions to join our If-Then logic, as shown in Figure 3.9.

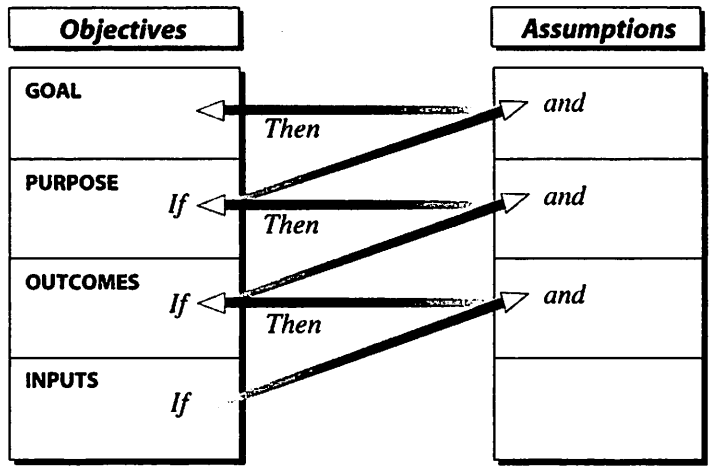


**FIGURE 3.8** If / AND / Then Logic Expands the Hypothesis

**The Implementation Equation™:**

- ▷ ***If*** Inputs plus valid Assumptions, ***Then*** Outcomes
- ▷ ***If*** Outcomes plus valid Assumptions, ***Then*** Purpose
- ▷ ***If*** Purpose plus valid Assumptions, ***Then*** Goal

**FIGURE 3.9** The Implementation Equation™

Every Assumption deserves up-close inspection with a skeptical magnifying glass. Simply stating an Assumption does not make it true. We must ask the following of each one:

- Is this Assumption reasonable? What are the odds it is valid? How do we know?
- What are the consequences for the project if it's not valid? How severe is the impact?
- How can we influence the Assumption in our favor?

Chapter 8 explores how Assumption analysis reveals risks and highlights potential problems. Addressed early enough, we can modify our game plan to head off trouble looming down the road.

### 4. How Do We Get There?

With Objectives, Measures, and Assumptions tacked in place, we can confidently turn to the Input level—the action steps to produce Outcomes. Project Inputs are defined as activities and associated resources (time, people, and money). This level—the land where bar charts dwell—is reasonably straightforward and familiar to anyone with project experience. Project management software doesn't help much at the higher levels of Objectives, but it works wonders here.

A clear Input task list, detailing the key steps to produce Outcomes, is the basis for implementation. In our workshop example, the Input list consists of the agenda, whose tasks and schedule are carefully tailored to produce the identified target Outcome. Resources include the people in the room, along with training materials (i.e., workbooks, markers, PowerPoint, and of course, coffee).

Figure 3.10 shows a complete LogFrame for the workshop.

## Ingredients of the Grid

Let's complete this whirlwind tour by looking at all the Logical Framework elements together. If you didn't grasp all the key points and nuances, don't worry. The next four chapters will drill deeper into these four questions and associated planning steps. By the end of the book, you'll have seen enough examples to put the concepts to work for you.



| Objectives | Success Measures | Verification | Assumptions |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Goal:**<br>Deliver project successfully. | **Goal Measures:**<br>Within next year:<br>1. Key project objectives reached on time, within budget, and at required performance level.<br>2. Fewer problems due to ineffective planning or road blocks that could have been anticipated during planning (e.g., killer Assumptions). | 1. Schedule and financial records<br>2. Project logs | **To achieve Goal:**<br>1. Concepts are relevant; they work in practice and add high value.<br>2. Organization and its environment are reasonably stable. |
| **Purpose:**<br>Participants apply what they learned following workshop. | **Purpose Measures:**<br>1. Within six weeks after training, 60% of participants have:<br>• completed project designs they began during workshop<br>• shared learning highlights with boss and team<br>• explained selected course concepts to others<br>• prepared a LogFrame for additional projects<br>• scheduled in-house training or project launch workshop<br>• adapted selected concepts/tools to enrich their current approach<br>2. After six months, all participants' roles in project have clear Objectives, Measures, Assumptions; all key stakeholders involved and all participants are using team process. | 1. Follow-up survey<br>2. Evaluation | **To achieve Purpose:**<br>1. Participants have opportunity to apply concepts (nature of job is suitable).<br>2. Participants' boss and organization's environment support and encourage application of concepts.<br>3. Participants can remember materials enough to apply them. |
| **Outcomes:**<br>Participants learn key concepts and tools during workshop. | **Outcome Measures:**<br>1.1 At workshop end, >90% of participants can correctly:<br>• identify and apply 4 key questions<br>• identify LogFrame terms, set QQT measures<br>• construct logical *If-Then* hierarchies<br>• identify and evaluate Assumptions<br>1.2 All teams develop an acceptable LogFrame for a case study in class within two hours.<br>1.3 LogFrame adds strategic value to participant thinking; all walk away with expanded capacity. | 1.1 In-class exercises, formal tests<br>1.2 LogFrame quality checklist<br>1.3 Ask participants | **To produce Outcomes:**<br>1. Participants want to attend, are motivated and open to learning.<br>2. Needs of group can be met within course design.<br>3. Amount of time is adequate to cover topics.<br>4. Instructor is effective with this group. |
| **Inputs:**<br>**Activities**<br>1.1 Establish objectives<br>1.2 Discuss core concepts<br>1.3 Fundamental questions<br>1.4 Preview of the Logical Framework<br>1.5 Vertical thinking–objectives and hypotheses<br>1.6 Horizontal thinking–measures and verifications<br>1.7 Identifying and reducing risk and assumptions<br>1.8 Apply to participant cases | **Schedule:**<br>**Day One**<br>8:30-9:30 a.m.<br>9:30-10:00 a.m.<br>10:00-10:45 a.m.<br>10:45-11:50 p.m.<br>1:00-2:00 p.m.<br>2:00-2:50 p.m.<br>3:00-4:00 p.m.<br>4:00-5:00 p.m. | | **To Obtain and Manage Inputs:**<br>1. Workshop facilities adequate to support learning Objectives.<br>2. Participants and instructor arrive on time, remain present and undistracted during scheduled time. |

**FIGURE 3.10** Strategic Project Management Workshop Design

Note how cells in the grid shown in Figure 3.11 integrate the project elements into a system through three types of directional logic:

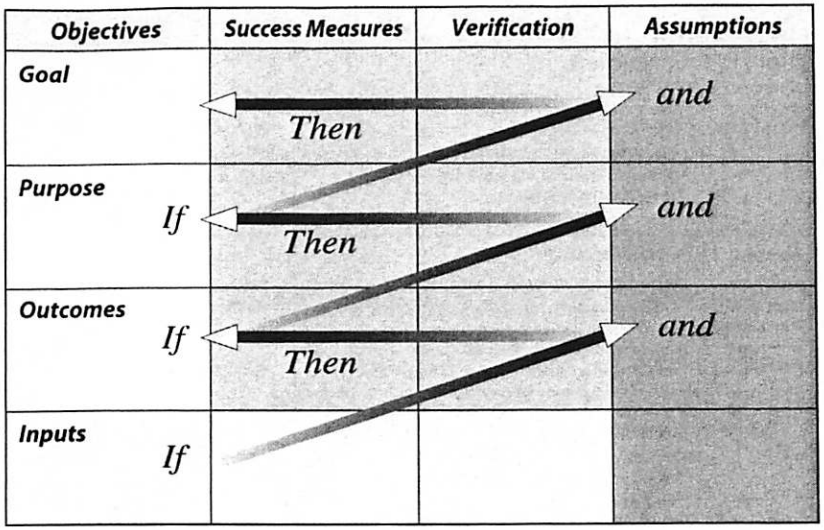


**FIGURE 3.11** LogFrame Incorporates Multiple Types of Logic

1. *Vertical Logic* connects Objectives using If-Then thinking—so that our approach hangs together.
2. *Horizontal Logic* fleshes out Objectives at each level using Measures and Verifications—so we know how we are progressing.
3. *Zig-Zag Logic* pulls in Assumptions as we ratchet up the strategic hierarchy, using our now familiar If-Then thinking—so we can eliminate problems in advance.

### Answering the Interrogatives

Take note of how the structure of the matrix elegantly incorporates answers to the standard "interrogative questions" like *who*, *what*, and *why*. Goal is the big picture program *why*, or the rationale for this and related projects supporting the broader strategy. Purpose is the project-specific *why*, or the reason for this particular effort. Outcomes are the *what* that we must produce. Inputs capture the *how*, *who* and *when*. (Figure 3.12 shows an Interrogative Chart.)

The interrogative concepts can help structure productive collaborative conversations between executive and project level staff, as this story shows. "Sheila" worked for a large, bureaucratic organization



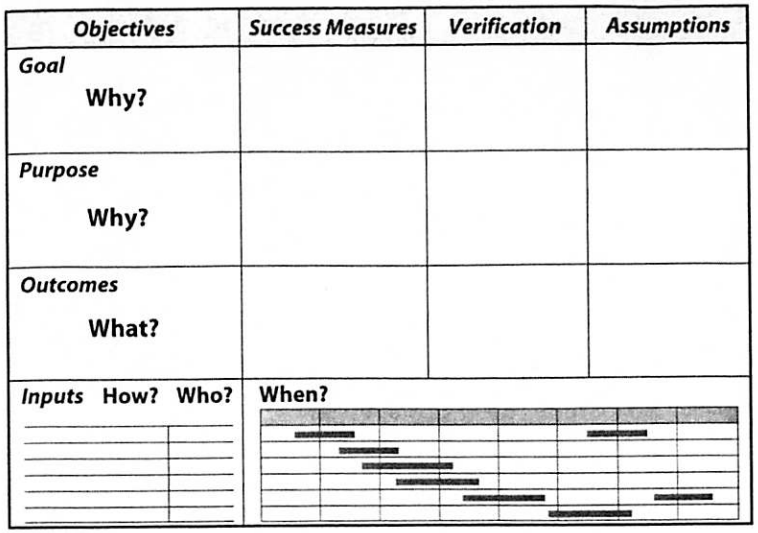


**FIGURE 3.12** LogFrame Answers Interrogative Questions

and had an impressive background in corporate security. A month after attending one of my public seminars at UCLA's Technical Management Program, she called with the exciting news that she had been asked to head up a major corporate initiative to develop a security lessons-learned database for all employees. This project matched the sweet spot of her skill set. Sheila asked me to help her core team start smart by developing a LogFrame for this high visibility project. We scheduled a meeting.

But the week before, an angry Sheila called and read me a memo from headquarters essentially dictating the terms of her project. The memo specified that she would have a staff of two people, would finish within six months, and would deliver three interim milestones by specified dates.

She was justifiably upset at being micro-managed in an area where she was the expert. The notion that upper management could correctly identify what this project would require, without doing serious planning of the type advocated in this book, smacked of arrogance or ignorance as well as demoralized the implementers.

A suggestion to executives who define projects needs and then assign them to project teams: Communicate with project personnel so everyone understands and agrees upon the *whys* (Purpose and Goal).

Agree in general terms about the approach—the *what* (Outcomes)—then let the team figure out the *how*, *who*, and *when* (Inputs) as well as firm up the specific *what* it will take to deliver Purpose and Goal.

I never heard back about how Sheila's project went, but I can predict that it fell way short of what it could have been had there been productive dialogue between those who originated the idea and those who would make it happen.

### A Rainbow of Applications

You now have previewed a potent planning process for designing projects of all types and sizes. Here are some work-related examples of projects that benefit from this approach:

- Preparing a strategic or operational plan for a company, division, or team
- Reorganizing a team and sharpening responsibilities
- Deciding how to implement new systems
- Evaluating and redirecting an ongoing project
- Reengineering a process to improve efficiency
- Conducting a paper study, or feasibility analysis
- Refining a rough concept into a proposal or action plan
- Analyzing a problem and developing a solution approach
- Planning new products and services from concept through delivery
- Organizing research and development
- Implementing initiatives identified through a balanced scorecard

This same thought process applies equally well to non-work and personal projects involving leisure, hobby, fitness, finance, family, and "honey-do's" around the house. Although the possibilities are endless, below are some additional ideas for the LogFrame use:

- Organizing church fund-raising events
- Managing a youth soccer team
- Turning your hobby into an online business
- Sharpening plans for professional development, learning, and career advancement



- Planning for promotion
- Writing and promoting a book
- Organizing a neighborhood Block Watch program
- Putting together a 25-year high school reunion
- Preparing for retirement
- Raising a loving and supportive family
- Completing an advanced degree part-time
- Remodeling your house
- Running for political office.

## Key Points Review

1. The LogFrame tool provides a common framework, syntax, and vocabulary that equips your team to define and test the core strategic hypotheses of any project or plan:

   If A → B, if B → C, if C → D; if D → Bingo!

2. Reduce problems early in the game by scrutinizing the Assumptions that are necessary for your strategic logic to be valid. While you can ignore Assumptions, you cannot ignore the impact of ignoring these Assumptions.
3. The four critical questions offer a simple and jargon-free way to learn and leverage the concepts in the LogFrame grid. These questions are inherently embedded in the LogFrame matrix, and answering those helps you cover all the important issues.
4. The Purpose level Objectives are the most essential because they describe the behavioral changes or conditions we aim for by delivering Outcomes.
5. The cells in the LogFrame grid connect in an integrated fashion using three directional types of logic.
   1. *Vertical Logic* connects Objectives using If-Then thinking.
   2. *Horizontal Logic* fleshes out Objectives at each level using Measures and Verifications.
   3. *Zig-Zag Logic* pulls in Assumptions, adding rigor to the If-Then thinking behind our strategy.

You may impress folks with your technical vocabulary, but if you want to speak the language of project success with your fellow team members, all concerned need to use the same vocabulary and the same logical framework. The four chapters in Part Two of this book will move you forward in learning this new language. As with any other language, to learn it you must use it. At first, you may speak haltingly and make mistakes. But by forming those new sounds, saying those new words, and thinking those new thoughts, they will soon become second-nature; and you'll gain the benefits that come from fluency in Strategic Project Management.

# 4

# Aligning Projects With Strategic Intent

*The nice thing about not planning is that failure comes as a complete surprise rather than being preceded by a period of worry and depression.*

—Anonymous

Maybe you've seen the classic cartoon illustration depicting the joining of two turn-of-the-century railway lines—one stretching hundreds of miles from the West and the other stretching hundreds of miles from the East. Gathered together to celebrate, civil engineers, draftsmen, and linemen from both companies eagerly anticipate the great event of joining the last 30-foot section. But as the final rails are put in place, everyone is astonished and stopped dead in their tracks to see the tracks off-kilter by a ponderous 15 feet!

The team immediately scrambles to figure out where they got derailed. The draftsmen are seen arguing over their blueprints; the engineers hastily work their slide rules and transits; and the lineman crew bosses scratch their heads in bewilderment. How in the world did this happen? The argument continues, but one truth remains: Two sets of tracks stretch into the distance as far as the eye can see—but the twain shall not meet that day.

This disastrous railroad track metaphor exemplifies the "strategic disconnect" that often happens in organizations. One set of tracks represents the Strategic Plan built by the CEO and the executive leadership team. The other set of tracks represents the projects and processes intended to support the Strategic Plan. But as the cartoon shows, things don't always line up despite good intentions and smart, hardworking people on both sides.

This chapter explores ways to align your projects with strategic intent so you stay on track. We'll supplement the ideas introduced in the last chapter with a few other best-practice strategic planning concepts that can be used at any organizational level.

While the LogFrame is widely used on stand-alone projects, it adds particular value when applied to portfolios of projects. Even if your concern is with single projects, these ideas will help relate your project with your organization's larger themes.

To understand why disconnects happen, and how to reduce them, we will first briefly explore several aspects of strategy. I promise to keep this short because discussing strategy formation, cascading, and portfolio management can put even the most caffeine-buzzed person to sleep if the subject lingers too long.

Then I'll describe a "quick and clean" unit-level strategic planning process, and share how a client applied these concepts. As this case study will prove, time invested in smart early planning can produce breakthrough performance.

## Strategy in a Nutshell

Conduct an online search at Amazon or Barnes & Noble for "strategy books" and you'll discover several thousand different publications. There are nearly as many different strategy variations as there are consultants who write books on the topic. But on the broadest levels, all the experts agree that strategy is what connects the present to the future.

Strategy is the particular means chosen to get from where you are to where you want to go, selected from multiple possibilities and reflecting your vision, mission, and values. An overall Strategy (big "S") usually consists of multiple strategic initiatives (small "s"), which are executed through programs, projects, and tasks.



While no list can be exhaustive, there exist some progressive and generic strategies with broad application. Several are, in fact, umbrella categories under which multiple specific strategies could be created. Consider how you might incorporate some of these progressive strategies for the twenty-first century:

- Flexibility (Southwest Airlines/Dell)
- Speed (FedEx)
- Horizontally Integrated—Related products/by-products (i.e., Arco's AM/PM Mini-Marts and ethanol plants)
- Networks and Alliances (Apple/IBM or Japanese Kiertsus)
- Value-Added—More Value for the Money (larger cereal boxes)
- Environmentally Improved/Green Products (i.e., solar heat; toxic waste clean-up)
- Mass Customization (Toyota)
- Simplification (Honda value analysis)
- Six Sigma (Motorola)
- Organizational Learning (GE, Peter Senge)
- Employee Morale/Family Benefits and Part-time Focus on Work (many firms)
- Management and Leadership Practices (GE)
- Outsourcing and Cottage Industries (many firms)
- Core Competencies — People, Technology, etc. (Sony)
- Market Tie-Ins/Preferred Customers (American Airlines)
- Cause-Related Marketing (McDonald's)
- Data Driven Marketing (Financial Services)
- Alternative Delivery Channels (Internet, Cisco)
- "Experiences " (Planet Hollywood, Adventure Travel)
- Value Chain Management (Wal-Mart)
- Social Networking (LinkedIn, Facebook)



Corporate strategy typically begins at the top and cascades down through strategic business units (SBUs) via a process of collective conversations that engage stakeholders in off-site retreats, negotiations, and meetings of all sorts. At the end of that process, the

corporate strategy ends up as collections—or portfolios—of strategic initiatives. Programs and projects become the change vehicles for executing strategic intent.

My clients have applied LogFrame concepts in many different creative ways to support their organization's strategic and operational planning process. The concepts help formulate and document these vital conversations in a meaningful way. Use them as an adjunct to your existing strategic planning system.

### Is Your Strategy Boxing You In?

But what determines whether a project is strategic or not? We recently reviewed a set of planning documents from a company that shall remain nameless. Believe it or not, they handled this determination with a simple check box on the proposed project form:

Is this a strategic project?

☐ Yes
☐ No

No further explanation was required or requested! But how did the proposer decide? Ouija board? Coin flip? Vested interest? Or was it solid analytic reasoning? My hunch is that this simplistic way of deciding boxed their organization in somewhere along the line.

My belief is that until you can describe how your project contributes to strategic intent—in clear and simple language—the chances of being right-on will be further off than those misaligned railroad tracks.

Fortunately, you now have a vocabulary for demonstrating clear connections—If-Then thinking. The language of strategic hypotheses offers a way to go beyond the jargon to show how proposed project Outcomes percolate up the chain and connect to a strategic Goal.

Try this: Take pen and paper and sketch out the logic for one of your projects. If you can't describe the If-Then links, you probably don't have a demonstrably strategic project.

As we'll soon see, Purpose is the lynch pin that connects project Objectives to strategic business Goals.



## Juggling Portfolios and Programs

> Project management is like juggling three balls—time, cost, and quality. Program management is like a troupe of circus performers standing in a circle, each juggling three balls and swapping balls from time to time.
>
> —G. Reiss

Let's now turn to the way that corporate strategy is moved into project strategy via portfolio and program management.

Portfolio management involves screening candidate projects through a series of phases and gates, and funding those that appear to deliver the biggest benefit boom for the buck. In well-run companies like GE, it's a systematic and integrated system with smooth handoffs from corporate to business units to departments and functions. More commonly, it's an imperfect and choppy process with plenty of chances to drop the ball.

Admittedly, it's not always easy to align strategy elements with responsible organizational units. Nor is it simple to identify who owns and who supports what Objectives, as many involve multiple players.

Bits and pieces of overall strategy may be scattered among a variety of planning processes and documents, which miss the connective tissue. The logical fit that exists gets lost among the verbiage.

These plans, however, are seldom summarized in a single, succinct project strategy document. Planning may be ad hoc or use systems that are heavy on paperwork, but short on common goals or common sense, where confusion reigns. Many such systems roll on with a life of their own and serve the organization's bureaucracy, but aren't relevant or useful to line and project managers.

Some progressive organizations have added a one- or two-page LogFrame summary to long project proposals as a quick way to communicate intent. Others have added LogFrames into their Phase and Gate process.

There are better ways to cascade. Better ways would make the underlying logic crystal clear. If-Then language is well suited to do just that.

### Grouping Projects by Common Purpose Themes

Any set of strategies involves multiple Objectives that can be set out in hierarchies that come together in some sort of a logical fashion. If they don't come together, that's an early warning of trouble coming!

As we saw in Chapter 2, Objectives Trees are a visual thinking tool which use If-Then logic to help us describe, develop, and test strategic relationships. These concepts can apply in multiple ways that are beneficial.

One example of using Objectives Tree at the program level by grouping is to group similar Purpose statements together. This greatly contributes to clarity in complicated situations.

Figure 4.1 shows a generic model in which the vision is supported by three major Goals, each with multiple Purposes. The case study below describes the practical power of "Purpose statements" to enhance corporate performance.

AEGON USA, a Fortune 500 company, is a major insurance holding company. After they acquired Transamerica and several other large insurance companies, they found themselves with overlapping

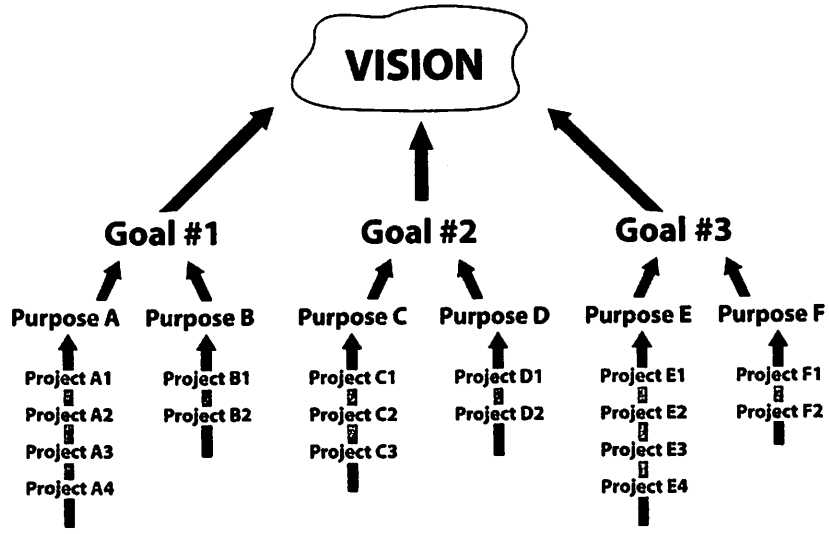


**FIGURE 4.1** Objectives Tree Linking Projects to Vision



Technology Services divisions that they then needed to consolidate to reduce redundant services. AEGON identified 120 IT projects under way in several different locales, but the project plans lacked clarity and alignment with central strategies. Their geographically dispersed team members needed to collaborate, but their roles were unclear. After we trained their top 100 IT staff members in LogFrame planning methods, they put the tools to the test on their portfolios. In doing so, they discovered that most projects lacked clear Purpose statements—the *why* of the projects was not obvious.

After clarifying several Division Goals, a handful of common *Purpose themes* were identified. At that point, 120 projects were merged into 30 more meaningful projects that integrated the company's Goals with one another. Cross-connecting project teams were then organized around these Purpose themes. Working on larger puzzle pieces enabled them to standardize software, streamline help desks, consolidate overlapping functions, and improve security. As a further result, communications improved, costs dropped, and service availability increased.

Every strategic thrust can be described and linked both up and down using If-Then language. This type of analysis can augment Goal cascading and portfolio management. When cascading is done by organization units without explicit causal relationships having been made clear somewhere in the process, the basic connecting threads and logic get lost. As a result, comments like the following are common from project managers: "We have a 40-page list of project tasks and no one has any idea of what we are trying to accomplish." This is a serious problem that is fixable when using top-down thinking and logical clustering.

## Managing Multiple Bottom Lines

You can't win a game when you don't know how to keep score. Sports would be boring if there were no way of tracking who was winning.

How do *you* keep score? What's on your strategic scoreboard? What do you, your colleagues, your boss, and your boss's boss pay attention to? The ultimate test of any strategy is how well it delivers the measurable expectations we have in mind.

What gets measured gets managed. What you pay attention to and are able to manage, of course, varies by your job function, level, and responsibilities.

We all know what Measures command the most attention in most organizations: Financials and budgets. These are essential, no doubt, but if the strategies are not right, how much money is being left on the table? And what is being neglected that will eventually make the financials turn red?

The USDA food group chart reminds us to eat from a variety of food categories to stay healthy because excess reliance on just one category can make you sick. In a similar fashion, focusing attention on primarily the quarterly numbers can create organizational indigestion unless tempered with a long-term, big-picture focus. Many an executive has skimped on investing in research or training because it was perceived that these would not produce meaningful benefits in the upcoming quarters. Those myopic executives reasoned that by the time such investments bore fruit, they'd be out of there!

Contemporary management literature describes bottom lines, triple bottom lines, balanced score cards, and quadruple bottom lines. Let's up the ante by proposing a five-category model called "The Quintuple Bottom Line." The five Measures at the heart of this comprehensive model are:

1. *Financial Goals/Measures*—Rate of return, profits, sales growth, cash flow, savings, and compound Measures such as revenue per passenger mile (a key airline standard).
2. *Customer Goals/Measures*—Numbers, increases, type, quality, satisfaction, value-added, churn, and so on.
3. *Operational Effectiveness Goals/Measures*—Context specific, critical performance indicators (e.g., hotel occupancy, mean time between failure, and efficiency ratios).
4. *Employee Goals/Measures*—Number, skills growth, turnover, longevity, mix, satisfaction, and culture values-orientation.
5. *Community Goals/Measures*—Impact or involvement on local community (e.g. blood drives and United Way).

Not all Measures have equal importance at all levels. While the CEO keeps an eye peeled on all of these categories, your emphasis may be more selective.

Much of my consulting requests come from clients seeking practical ways to leverage their work unit's performance. These requests don't always come from the CEO. Plenty of motivated mid-level leaders



want strategic tune-ups. So, here is an approach we have found valuable to sharpen strategy and create executable action plans for any organizational level.

## Quick and Clean Strategic Planning at Any Level

In a perfect world, the organization planning process would deliver—on a silver platter no less—your menu of Goals, strategies, projects already cleanly sliced and diced and ready for action.

But in practice, leaders must often create that clarity themselves by applying a version of portfolio management at their own organization unit level.

This chapter section features a case study of a client organization committed to improving their performance and productivity by doing just that. Their actual work products are included to illustrate how this method adds value. As you read, consider how their approach could bring clarity in your situation.

While the exact steps are tailored to each case, implementation generally involves a series of well-designed and facilitated action-planning workshops of one or more days spread over several weeks. The process draws on existing plans and documents and is fully compatible with—and provides ways to operationalize—the formal planning requirements of virtually any organization. And if your company's process is messy—well, this practical process is quick and clean.

The portfolio concept applies at all organization levels. After all, doesn't your own work unit manage a portfolio of projects that shifts over time? And doesn't your own work (as well as life itself) consist of an ever-changing portfolio of Goal-seeking projects?

### Hands-On Planning Example in a National Lab

The Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) is an 8,000-person research institute in New Mexico spread out over a rugged mountainous area. LANL's vision is to be the premiere organization in the world applying science to the solution of technical problems critical to national and global security.

Their multiple missions include: (1) To provide the core material science and technology base needed to maintain confidence in the safety and reliability of the nation's nuclear weapons; (2) to apply

technical expertise to address a broad range of national security needs in energy, environment, infrastructure and conventional defense; and (3) to research materials to create new knowledge and lay the foundations for new technologies.

The LANL Geographic Information Service (GIS) team was comprised of 20 key players who provide various LANL customers with a variety of sophisticated maps, including topographic maps as well as specialized maps showing vegetation patterns, underground hydrology, wildlife, etc. These maps are not pulled off-the-shelf, but custom-created according to customer specifications.

The importance of GIS services became clear during the Cerro Grande wildfire that raced across the lab, burning 400 homes and threatening critical Lab facilities. GIS was quickly called into 24-hour operation and their maps helped emergency teams manage the fast-breaking situation. While the team delivered the necessary help through heroic efforts, the experience revealed serious shortcomings in how they operated.

They recognized the urgent need to improve because in the future, GIS information will be critical to protect the groundwater, potentially threatened by a legacy of buried nuclear wastes.

## Eight Logical Planning Steps

The following steps offer a logical game plan for unit level strategic planning and execution. They derive from my experience assisting hundreds of teams in diverse organizations worldwide. The first seven steps get things going, the eighth keeps things rolling with periodic strategic updates. As we walk through each step, consider how you might follow a similar path with your own collection of projects.

### Step 1. Clarify the Planning Context and Issues

Begin with a basic question—What are your primary motivations and desired Outcomes from the planning process? To strengthen teamwork? Shift directions? Attract new customers? Improve procedures? Get the boss off your back? Multiple Outcomes are possible. Define yours at the start.



Identify the boundaries of your effort by identifying the "system" for which you are doing the plan. Intact units are not the only choices—the system of interest could be a cross-functional group, a technology initiative, or various other configurations. (Sometimes it helps to define what is *not* included in your system of interest.)

The system of interest may thread through multiple organizations. On another project, I assisted the U.S. Advanced Simulation and Computing program (ASC) in developing a national strategic plan for supercomputer development. Their system of interest encompassed a broad network, which wove through parts of many different organizations and required integrating multiple planning documents with related technology blueprints.

GIS leaders Dr. John Huchton and his deputy Dr. Steve Koch had attended the Strategic Project Management seminar I conduct at the Los Alamos Management Institute, and immediately saw the applicability of the concepts. Dr. Huchton's primary Outcome was to make the unit operationally self-sufficient so that he could move elsewhere in the Lab. This meant putting in place action plans consistent with recently developed division and group plans, which were understood and supported by motivated, effective teams.

### Step 2. Involve Key Players

Getting input from all key players is crucial. Because people support what they help create, you need to involve all key parties who have a stake in the process and its results. Begin by identifying and connecting with key internal and external stakeholders (customers in particular) to identify their concerns and needs. Many of these will translate into issues to tackle head-on, or at least to have on your radar.

Many different involvement roles are possible (e.g., giving input and opinions, joining planning team meetings, reviewing interim results, getting briefed on final results, and so on). Obtaining input can be as simple as meeting over a cup of coffee or it may involve structured focus groups and customer surveys.

### Step 3. Scan Your Environment

Scanning your environment begins with examining all relevant business units' plans as well as those of your key outside organizations

and your customer base. In most cases, there is no single guiding master document. Vital pieces may be scattered across numerous documents. Review these in order to extract Objectives and highlight those efforts that relate to yours. Without doing so, it's like leaving a puzzle with a missing part and expecting it to be a complete design.

If appropriate, conduct an external environmental scan of some sort to identify trends, events, and drivers that influence your future directions. This is often done at an enterprise-level.

Broad-brush scans of the larger environment examine the big picture and change factors that may impact your plans. This wide-angle scan seeks to identify the SKEPTIC factors—Societal, K(C)ompetitive, Economic/Environmental, Political, Technological, Industrial and Consumer/Client (adapted from the Haines Centre ABC Model)—and any change blips on the radar which may impact your project during its life. This broad-brush scan is often done during a larger strategic planning process and is optional for individual projects.

GIS leaders examined the Division and Laboratory documents and highlighted Objectives to which their team might contribute. They reviewed documents and extracted a list of some 15 Objectives, which would be turned into strategies by the larger team during the hands-on action workshops.

Steps three through seven involve bringing together the core team (including key technical and administrative staff), in a workshop setting. Agendas for these sessions are custom-designed, and provide skills training followed by application to the identified issues. The GIS project agenda consisted of a concentrated two-day RAP (Rapid Action Planning) workshop for all staff with a one-day follow-up six weeks later.

For best results in this process, engage a skilled external consultant. An outside facilitator who is expert in action-planning workshop design and facilitation keeps the process moving. Choose a consultant who is a process expert, not a content expert. "Outside" may also mean someone who is an internal organization consultant with the right skills, but is not part of the immediate group.

### Step 4. Revisit Your Vision/Mission/Values

Why should a team develop their own vision, mission, and value statements (VMV) when these already exist for the parent organization?



The reason is simple: Consciously choosing and shaping their own unit-level VMVs lets people better appreciate how what they do delivers real value to their customers and to each other.

For most employees, it's not easy to identify how their individual efforts contribute to critical high level missions such as, in this case, stewardship of the nuclear stock pile. There is a huge gap between such a broad mission and their day-to-day work. But writing home-grown, localized statements stimulates rich discussion, which usually leads to stronger engagement and personal commitment. Group-level Mission and Vision statements, of course, must derive from and support the larger organization statements.

Vision can be defined as *what we wish to see in the future that we can affect*; and Mission defined as *how we will get there.*

> ***GIS Vision (What We Want to See)***
> Decision-makers use GIS-provided information in making informed decisions that support good environmental stewardship of the LANL reservation.
>
> ***GIS Mission (How We Will Get There)***
> Efficiently provide various decision-makers with GIS-related maps and information that meet their needs.

Note that the connecting logic between Mission and Vision is a direct causal relationship and a linked operational hypothesis that says, "*If* we efficiently *provide* information, *then* GIS decision-makers can *use* the information."

Values are given lip-service and glossed over in many companies because they seem a given, or because values seem fluffy, or because even discussing them may feel awkward. Again, the benefit is to make these come alive with meaning for those involved. Values discussions deserve time—especially for new groups just getting their bearings are those aiming to shift operations norms.

Beginning from Lab-wide values, the GIS team crafted a set of agreed upon values that would become their operating norms in

delivering Vision/Mission as well as for making GIS a great place to work. Their list of one dozen included:

- Take responsibility
- Continuously improve
- Have fun
- Focus on the customer
- Respect each other
- Strive for excellence

A further refinement of values involves defining the specific behaviors that constitute the spirit of the value. What, for example, does "respect each other" mean on a day-to-day basis? Converting these into a set of observable behaviors (we "do-this" but "don't do this") builds a shared code of conduct that translates into improved interpersonal behavior and operational effectiveness. Exercises like this generate enormous energy and enthusiasm and build a high-performance, customer-oriented culture.

### Step 5. Sharpen Your Goals and Measures

You can't manage what you can't measure. The measurement discussion is one of the most enlightening any group can have. Success Measures at the until level usually concentrate in one or more of the big five areas. They are chosen to reflect the key Goals that, when achieved, optimize the group's value-adding contributions to their customers' Goals.

GIS-selected key success Measures incorporated their mission, vision, and values; and thus, they turned these concepts into operational tools—not just verbal window dressing. Five clusters of Measures were chosen, along with specific indicators for each. (See box on next page.)

These Measures resemble the well-known balanced scorecard approach, which includes customer, employee and key internal operational Measures. Balanced scorecards, however, usually ignore VMV Measures and are seldom strategic in their derivation. But the major difference that makes this process so potent comes in the next step.

### Step 6. Develop Core Strategies

This is the most creative part—coalescing the various Goals into a manageable set of strategies which collectively deliver the measurable



## GIS Success Measures

1. Customer satisfaction with quality of GIS products and services (reflects GIS Vision and customers).
   - Increased percent of customers rate as "excellent"
   - Growing number of requests from current customers
   - Increased number of new customers
2. Efficiently provide our customers with needed services and products (reflects GIS Mission and customers).
   - Reasonable cost to deliver various products
   - Meet promised schedule a certain percent of the time
3. Greater team cohesiveness, effectiveness, and living our values (reflects employee values).
   - Reduced voluntary turnover
   - Increased staff morale
4. Effective and consistent utilization of best practices change (reflects key operational needs).
   - Increased percent of projects use standard conduct of operations
   - Ability to accurately predict time/cost to deliver a GIS map
5. Increased Division and Laboratory awareness of GIS Team services and products (reflect customers).
   - Increased number of senior-level managers and possible users who are aware

results. Developing strategies is as much art as science, requiring thoughtfully organized Objectives into meaningful and manageable clusters.

There seldom exists a one-to-one relationship between Goals and strategies, which is partially because of inconsistent language use and because an Outcome for the CEO may be a Goal for those lower in the hierarchy. The preliminary list of 15 GIS Objectives pulled from various documents was blended into a set of eight strategies. (When terminology

and perspective differences are reconciled, different Objectives statements from various documents often collapse into one Strategy.)

Chosen strategies should provide solutions to current problems and build future capacity.

In this case, GIS team member skill levels varied widely and employees used very different approaches to providing customers with maps. Some approaches were effective and time-efficient, while others were ad hoc and inefficient. There were few standard procedures, so they could not model best practice. As a result, *Conduct of Operations* became the top priority new strategy.

A related problem was that team members worked in geographically dispersed customer premises and seldom were physically together. Team cohesion and knowledge-sharing were low. So, *Team Networking* emerged as a vital strategy to strengthen team bonds. These two examples show how *analysis of problems leads to shaping specific solution strategies.*

GIS described their eight core strategies with a short title and brief elaboration.

1. *Conduct of Operations*—Improve formality of team operations and standardize procedures.
2. *Team Networking*—Improve team dynamics through periodic get-togethers and networking with colleagues.
3. *Continuous Process Improvement*—Continually improve team processes and services.
4. *Marketing*—Enhance team visibility and expand the customer base via web pages and information programs.
5. *Customer Feedback*—Monitor customer satisfaction through surveys and analysis of lessons learned.
6. *Customer Education*—Educate customers about the products and services we offer.
7. *Data of Known Accuracy and Lineage*—Ensure that maps have appropriate meta-data tags attached so customers are aware of limitations.
8. *Employee Development*—Enhance development of skills through formal and informal means.

Now comes the pay-off step: *Analyzing strategies in relationship to Success Measures.* This insightful step helps you zoom in on the right set



of strategies for maximum impact on Measures. The Strategies-Measures matrix offers a new lens to analyze what matters most—leading to thoughtful iteration, and refinement to uncover hidden synergy.

The generic form of this matrix is shown in Figure 4.2, while Figure 4.3 shows the matrix with the GIS Measures and strategies.

| KEY SUCCESS MEASURES | CORE STRATEGIES | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7. |
| 1. Financial: . . | | | | | | | |
| 2. Customers: . . | | | | | | | |
| 3. Operational Effectiveness: . . | | | | | | | |
| 4. Employee: . . | | | | | | | |
| 5. Community: . . | | | | | | | |

**FIGURE 4.2** Generic Format of the Strategies-Measures Matrix

| KEY SUCCESS MEASURES | CORE STRATEGIES | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1. Conduct of Operation | 2. Team Networking | 3. Continuous Process Improvement | 4. Marketing | 5. Customer Feedback | 6. Customer Education | 7. Data of Known Accuracy & Lineage | 8. Employee Development |
| 1. Customer Satisfaction with quality of GIS products and services | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Efficiently provide our customers with needed services and products | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Greater team cohesiveness, and living our values | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Effective and consistent utilization of best practices | | | | | | | | |
| 5. Increased Division and Lab awareness of Team services and products | | | | | | | | |

**FIGURE 4.3** GIS Strategies-Measures Matrix

✓✓ = Major Impact ✓ = Some Impact

| KEY SUCCESS MEASURES | CORE STRATEGIES | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1. Conduct of Operation | 2. Team Networking | 3. Continuous Process Improvement | 4. Marketing | 5. Customer Feedback | 6. Customer Education | 7. Data of Known Accuracy & Lineage | 8. Employee Development |
| 1. Customer Satisfaction with quality of GIS products and services | ✓✓ | ✓ | ✓✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 2. Efficiently provide our customers with needed services and products | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 3. Greater team cohesiveness, and living our values | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| 4. Effective and consistent utilization of best practices | ✓✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 5. Increased Division and Lab awareness of Team services and products | | | | ✓✓ | | ✓ | | |

**FIGURE 4.4 Testing the Impact of Strategies on Measures**

In Figure 4.4, checkmarks in the matrix cells show the estimated degree of impact of each strategy on each Success Measure. The matrix provoked valuable discussion and helped them converge on the optimum set of strategies to deliver Measures throughout the project life cycle. The chosen cluster of GIS strategies would increase current effectiveness while also building future capacity.

After completing their work on a much-erased and rewritten whiteboard, the team reached a consensus conclusion and celebrated out loud: "We are covered!"

If you develop a Strategy-Measures matrix like this example, you'll establish a strong framework for achieving superior performance and delivering outstanding customer value.

### Step 7. Turn Strategies Into Execution Plans

With a coherent set of strategies defined, the next step was creating action plans and building unified implementation teams, both of which can occur simultaneously when using the Logical Framework tool.

During the first GIS workshop, participants learned how to use the LogFrame and then formed sub-teams of two or three people to



begin developing plans for each strategy. The LogFrame helped members to wrap their minds around a complex issue and develop a solid plan. Between the first and second workshops, they met on their own to continue the work. Six weeks later, these preliminary project designs were brought back for consultant review during a one-day follow-up workshop.

A copy of Conduct of the Operations Logical Frameworks strategy can be found in the Appendix (You can view the GIS Team Networking design on the web site *www.ManagementPro.com*).

The LogFrame, of course, can be used on its own for discrete projects or strategies without going through the prior strategic planning steps.

Implementing new strategy involves change to create the future. But at the same time, today's operational work must get done. To avoid overwhelming the teams, GIS prioritized and staggered the start of each strategy rather than initiating them all at once. "Strategy owners" volunteered to manage each strategy. Two new "strategy starts" per quarter were scheduled, as shown in Figure 4.5, the implementation matrix.

The hands-on approach generated a strong sense of ownership, which translated into implementation momentum. A couple of months after the workshops, Dr. John Huchton felt comfortable that GIS was self-sufficient and took another Lab position as planned. The workshop products gave the new leadership team the

| KEY SUCCESS MEASURES | CORE STRATEGIES | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1. Conduct of Operation | 2. Team Networking | 3. Continuous Process Improvement | 4. Marketing | 5. Customer Feedback | 6. Customer Education | 7. Data of Known Accuracy & Lineage | 8. Employee Development |
| Strategy Owner | Ortega | Red Star | Bennett | Koch | Gebhardt | Oudejans | Woodward | McKown |
| 1st Quarter | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | |
| 2nd Quarter | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | |
| 3rd Quarter | | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ |
| 4th Quarter | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | |

**FIGURE 4.5 Prioritizing for Implementation: Project Starts**

foundation needed to smoothly take over and manage the program successfully.

Achieving organization excellence is an ongoing process, not a one-shot workshop event.

### Step 8. Follow Up and Continue the Process

Build an annual implementation calendar that includes periodic review and refinement. Update your project plans as conditions change. By intelligently linking this with other processes and systems, you will establish your own practical strategic management system and harvest the fruit of exceptional performance.

Management consultants like me get warm and fuzzy feelings when a client letter comes out of the blue and reports a success story. GIS team member Tony Tagliaferro made these observations in an e-mail sent to me a year later.

> During these workshops, the folks in the GIS group came together and focused on a specific direction. We had become overwhelmed and disillusioned by the weight of the organization and allowed the bureaucracy to make us feel powerless and not able to get things done. But after the workshop, we felt empowered and in control. Our perception of upper management improved and things went smoother. We worked better as a team. Our morale and performance improved dramatically.

Tony's letter confirmed what a motivated group of men and women can do when given the right tools and empowered to shape their destiny. The LogFrame tools you'll learn to use in the chapters that follow will help you create and enjoy successful solutions for you, your team, and your customers. The process may get bumpy at times, but it's worth it to get the right ingredients in place to smooth out your system.

## Key Points Review

1. The LogFrame can be the cornerstone of any unit-level management system. However, this presumes that there is a sound, overarching strategy to begin with. Since this is not always true, use the Quick and Clean planning steps.



**Summary of Quick and Clean Strategic Planning Steps**

1. *Clarify the Planning Context and Issues*—Be clear about your expected planning Outcomes and identify current issues to include.
2. *Involve Key Players*—Decide who to involve in your process to build buy-in and stay-in.
3. *Scan Your Environment*—Identify what's changing in your environment; and analyze division and department plans to extract Goals your group shares or owns.
4. *Revisit Your Vision/Mission/Values*—Turn these "fluff" statements into high-performance tools that energize staff and build shared commitment.
5. *Sharpen Your Goals and Measures*—Develop a meaningful performance scorecard that identifies how you deliver customer value.
6. *Develop Core Strategies*—Turn Goals into strategies, and test those strategies for impact against Measures to ensure smart choices.
7. *Turn Strategies into Executable Plans*—Using the Logical Framework. Let the responsible players flesh out implementation plans.
8. *Follow Up and Continue the Process*—Build momentum by reviewing and updating the plans while strengthening the planning process itself.

2. To add clarity to large or confusing portfolios, group projects by their Goal and Purpose. Projects with no clear Purposes are candidates for elimination.
3. Be clear about the Measures that matter in your organization unit. Pick meaningful Measures guided by the Quintuple Bottom Line categories.
4. Strong benefits come from developing a strategy and Measures matrix.

This Part One overview, should give you an initial understanding of how Strategic Project Management concepts add value. The four chapters in Part Two drill down to explore the Four Critical Strategic Questions in detail, and illustrate how to apply them at the project level.