

Strategy Workshops



**Complete your strategic plan
in three days rather
than three months!**

**“If managers don’t know what to look for
or if they’re snowed by details,
confusion continues and progress is slow.”**

Bruce Holland

Strategy sessions can be exciting, even exhilarating,. So why so many uninteresting and boring?

Photographs from a recent session:



**“We don’t do retreats
We only do advances.”
Bruce Holland**

Why Strategic Workshops are important

1. The pace of change

A hundred years ago a driver could probably dose off for a while as he drove the horse and cart. Today as we manoeuvre between the traffic on the multilane motorway it pays to be totally alert - all of us. The same goes for business.

2. Focus on the important

We become much more aware of those things we think about. Have you ever started to study a subject only to find everyone else seems to be studying it too? People care about those things they have put mental and emotional energy into and we tend to do those things which we focus our thoughts on. Get your people thinking about those things that are important in your business and they will become much more aware of them, care more about them and do them.

3. Commitment.

Emotions and values are more important to getting people to change than rational thought, no matter how logical that thought may be. A change in attitude can not be sold; it must be bought. It is easy to get people to understand intellectually why they should do something, but to get them emotionally involved is much more difficult. However, until emotional involvement is achieved, change will not happen. Involvement and ownership are critical to developing commitment. Your strategic planning must achieve involvement (ideally) of everyone who will be part of the implementation.

4. Action.

Action occurs only when a person has the desire (the values and emotional attitude), the knowledge (correct thinking and logic) and the skills to undertake the action.

So if they’re important why are they done so poorly?

Every year hundreds of thousands of dollars are spent by organisations on strategic conferences. Much of it is wasted!! Here's Why.

They fail because they mistakenly believe that strategy is an intellectual activity when actually it's largely about emotions. As a result they put about 80% of their effort into logic, positions, costs and features and expect change to result. They fail to realise that people only change voluntarily if they feel safe and have some control over the direction they are going. Emotions, feelings, trust and security are therefore where the 80% should be put. If managers can't design a process that gets under the surface to the unconscious level they will fail. As Wes Brown, a manager I respect greatly and MD of Datamail says:

“It's the last 14 inches from the head
to the heart that matters most.”

They fail to get it off paper and into heads. It's got to come off the paper and into every head

important to delivering the implementation. And I mean EVERY head. Otherwise it remains theoretical nonsense that belongs to someone else. If it's done properly, you should be able to burn the final document confident that everyone understands what they have to do. This level of understanding is much quicker and easier than you probably believe. Sure it requires people across the organisation becoming involved but there are tricks to doing it that save time and in the process generate enormous amounts of understanding, energy, goodwill and commitment. The most people I have had involved was 6500 people at the BNZ.

Another key reason for failure is lack of management attention. In a recent distressing survey it was found that 85% of management teams spend less than one hour a month discussing their strategies. Now I ask you! Strategy by its very definition is a statement of the most important things happening in the organisation and yet managers are simply not talking about them!!! Our process focuses managers' attention constantly on achieving their strategies.

They fail because the process is too logical and rational. Dare I say BORING!!!

There are two schools of strategy:

1. A linear or left brain school and
2. A non linear or right brain school.

TWO SCHOOLS OF STRATEGY

LINEAR

Left Brain Thinking

Starts With the Present

Sequence =

**where are we?
where do we want to go?
how are we going to get there?**

Driven by analysts

Ideas must be imported

**Extensive analysis
determines strategies**

NON LINEAR

Right Brain Thinking

Starts With the Vision

Sequence =

**where do we want to go?
where are we?
how are we going to get there?**

Driven by Line

Ideas exist within firm

**Extensive analysis to
test strategies**

Both schools have their strengths and weaknesses. It would be wrong to disregard either. However, in my experience most western organisations rely far too much on the linear approach. As a result, workshops are boring. And not nearly as successful as they could be.

Complete your strategic plan in three days rather than three months!

This process uses little known secrets that allow large organisations and SMEs to create fundamentally better Strategic Plans in a fraction of the time most organisations take.

It's ideal for Boards, CEOs, General Managers and Business Unit Managers who are required to produce quality Strategic Plans and who don't want to spend unnecessary time doing it.

It covers how to:

- Analyse and prioritise external changes likely to impact on the organisation
- Undertake industry/sector trends and understand their impact on the organisation
- Understand customer needs and build these into the Strategic Plan
- Identify the appropriate Value Proposition for your organisation
- Analyse the Value Chain for your industry/sector
- Identify strategies sufficient to achieve the Vision
- Present your Strategic Plan on a one page summary.

It moves thinking to a new plane

Virtual Group strategy sessions are a major learning opportunity. The eight quotes on learning (see below) guide our Workshops so you turn your strategy sessions into significant learning sessions:

- 1 'All the music ever written consists of patterns of no more than 12 notes'.
Don Fabum - Three Roads to Awareness.**

Great strategy does not have to come from the genius of completely original thought. There are not very many ways (notes) to play business, but some create wonderful music and others complete discord. The trick is to open minds enough to play the notes in a different order and to break 'in-the-box' thinking:

- I use toys and games
- I use metaphors
- I use de Bono's Thinking Hats
- I use metamorphosis techniques
- I use drawing techniques
- I use the "Most Outrageous Ideas Award".

- 2. 'People rarely succeed at anything unless they have fun doing it.'
Dale Carnegie.**

Laughter is a good barometer of success in Bruce Holland's Workshops. We often have an 'Outrageous Ideas Award'. Ask people to 'laugh with each other' but not 'at each other'.

- 3. 'To make a great dream come true, you must first have a great dream'.
Hans Selye.**

In Bruce Holland's Workshops we make sure everyone has:

- A thorough understanding of the Vision
- Personally bought into the Vision
- Been personally involved
- Agreed that the Vision is bold and worth chasing.

To stretch the thinking I:

- Set challenging expectations
- Use colour
- Use drawings
- Use analogue drawings
- Use mind maps
- Use models
- Use analogies
- Use 'open space' techniques.

4. 'Music can do in hours what weeks of meditative practice strive towards.'
Colin Rose, Accelerated Learning.

Bruce Holland uses music to improve thinking and to change the mood:

- Rock and roll for energy
- Baroque for thinking
- Brain gym for recharging.

5. 'Your most valuable asset is a positive attitude.'
Bobbi DePorter, Quantum Learning.

To achieve positive attitudes and build self esteem Bruce Holland:

- Uses positive affirmation posters on the walls
- Uses 'I think your great' cards
- Uses 'When I took the lead' exercise
- Presents 'certificates of achievement'
- Trusts in people to do the right thing
- Uses motivational stories
- Gets people in circles and sharing
- Encourages clapping.

6. 'We forget what we hear. We remember what we see. We learn what we do.'
Unknown.

People need to be deeply involved if the strategies are to be truly understood. Doing is a critical aspect. Blank sheet approaches nearly always take less time to achieve in the long term.

7. 'Children enter school as question marks and leave as periods.'
Neil Postman, Teaching as a Subversive Activity.

To ensure a successful Workshop I
Bruce achieves a sense of:

- Openness and trust
- Inquiring behaviour
- 'We can do it!'

8. 'Jigsaw puzzles are much easier when you have seen the whole picture first.'
Dryden & Vos - The Learning Connection.

People need to not only 'see' the vision but they must also 'see' how their piece of the puzzle fits. All plans end up with everyone knowing their part. The Strategy is not complete unless this is achieved.

There's no doubt that encouraging non linear thinking will produce better strategies. It's all about seeing patterns rather than details. It's about seeing the next wave that's coming then figuring out how to set up the company to take advantage of it.

The Stages of Strategy

Successful strategic programs is a bit like going to a good doctor, it should have eight steps. Sometimes I get involved in all steps, other times the client has the skills to undertake some Stages themselves:

1. Examination.

This includes talking to a selection of people to clearly understand what has happened in the past, what has worked, what has not worked and some of the key environmental aspects.

2. Diagnostics.

This includes getting mutual agreement about what the real problems are likely to be.

3. Consultation.

If the diagnostic is unclear or if there is to be more than one consultant involved, then it's critical to get the opinions of others and their understanding of their roles.

4. Prescription.

This includes a clear statement of the mutually agreed approach to be used. It must always include any side affects or short comings of the treatment and pros and cons of alternative approaches.

5. Workshop Facilitation.

Bruce is one of New Zealand's most experienced Facilitators in Strategy, however he is far more than just a top facilitator; he also has a deep business strategy knowledge and experience. He has helped many organisations find a more successful path to the future. He is known for his financial and creative strategic thinking skills (trained in finance and a practising artist). His background is in business not consulting. He knows what it's like to be a senior manager. Before becoming a consultant he was Group Strategy Manager at the BNZ. Bruce has the experience and the confidence to challenge even the most senior managers and Board Members if he thinks their thinking lacks rigour or is insufficiently strategic.

6. Report.

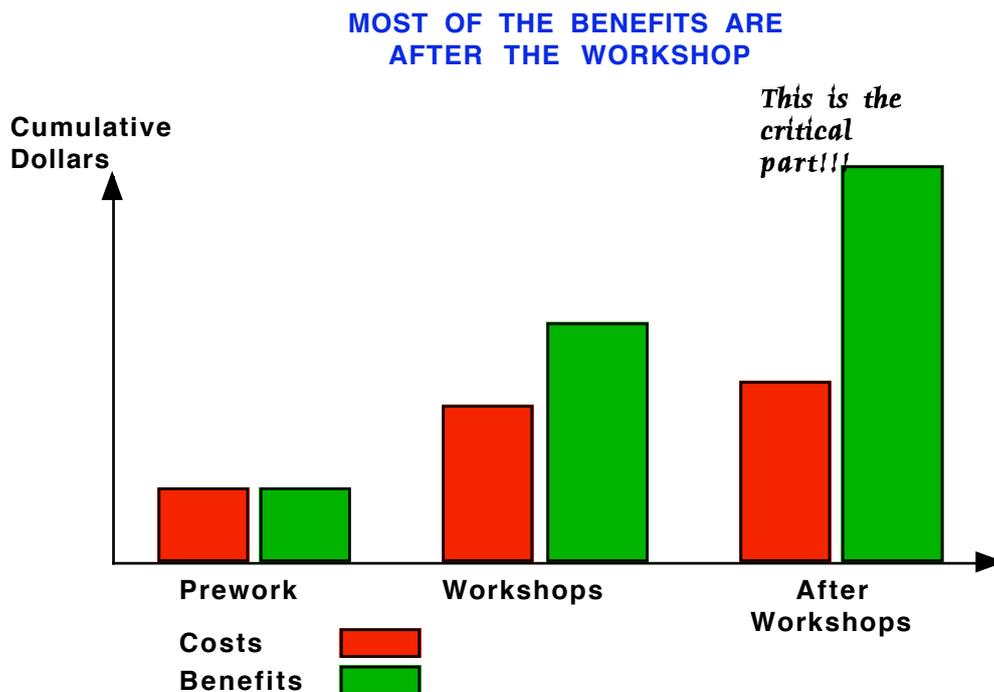
Bruce strongly supports the writing of the plan. This helps to formulate and crystallise the thinking. If it's not written there will be as many versions of what's important in it as there are

people. But once it's written and summarised down to one page (so that it's quite clear what really matters) we need to find some way of symbolising that it is not tablets of stone. Most clients get Bruce to draft the Strategic Plan professionally. They love the way he reduces the essence onto one page.

7. Execution.

Execution is the difference between talking about it versus doing it. Some companies think that just because they have a meeting with the theme 'taking it to the next level' means they are actually doing it. Usually the strategic planning is the easy bit of working strategically. The best laid plans are quite useless unless they are executed and action results.

This is by far the longest part of the process. It involves the alignment of every person, system and process in the organisation to achieving the strategies. More Strategy Processes fail at this point than anywhere else.



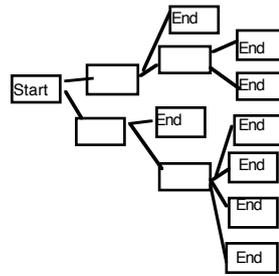
8. Follow up.

In my experience all clients know that the strategies are critical to the health of their organisations but sometimes they require a follow up system to keep them from forgetting and slipping into the urgent and immediate.

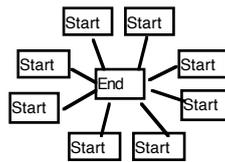
Process of Strategy

There are two processes for developing strategy: the linear approach and the concentric approach.

1. The Linear Approach is by far the most common used by Strategists however it tends to lead to decisions and conclusions too early in the process. It also leads to too many small actions that are not really strategic.



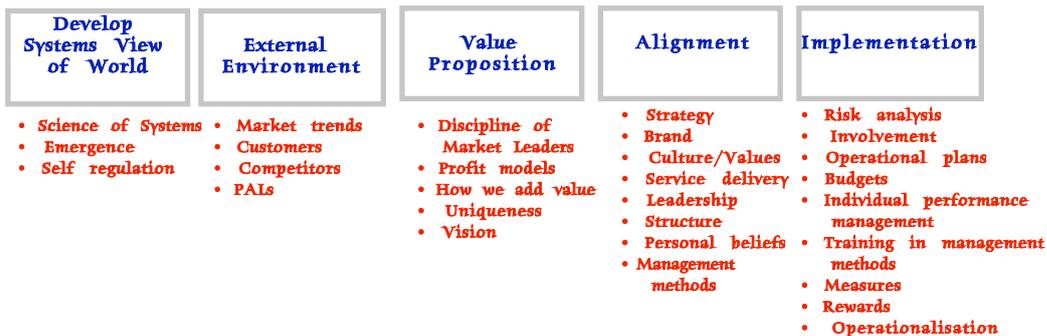
2. The Concentric Approach is more difficult for participants because we approach issues from many different angles deliberately not drawing conclusions and making decisions until near the end of the process. However it is the process that I favour because it leads to a few “big rock” strategies and more certainty that the issues addressed are indeed strategic.



Content

The content varies, depending on whether we’re working in the private sector or the public sector, and with each client but will often examine some of the following:

Strategy Model for Private Sector



What other clients have said

“Brilliant prework because it really got me thinking in a bigger, strategic way before we got into the detail. No hesitation in recommending Bruce.”, Emily Loughnan, CEO, Click Suite, Business woman of the year.

“Good preparation material, well linked into workshop. Good facilitation with diverse group.” Kim Wicksteed, Chief Executive Officer, Saatchi & Saatchi.

“Well prepared, organised and conducted ... Would highly recommend. One of the best workshops..” Ken Douglas, Board Member, Air New Zealand.

"A big thank you for your wisdom, effort, enthusiasm and patience in my cause. I have enjoyed our program to date and look forward to continuing." Brent Anderson, Corporate Services Manager, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

"Very useful.. Exceeded my expectations. Bruce facilitated well, he let the group maximise their contribution. A very effective approach, one of the best I've been to." Warwick Wright, General Manager TAB.

"Hard work. Great facilitation. Generated enthusiasm. Very worthwhile - happy to recommend." Richard Calvert - Chairman, SMC Building Society.

"One of the highlights of the last year has been the Strategic Planning session you facilitated for the Northern Region. It was a memorable learning session for me and I felt compelled to write and say "thank you". I am richer for the experience!..... Thanks Bruce for your wisdom, your guidance and above all the challenge to think hard about the future." Mike Spraggon, Regional Sales Manager, BNZ

"Great facilitation, instead of a boring workshop this was exciting. I feel recharged and positive about the future. Would thoroughly recommend Bruce". Gary Skerten (Group Leader).

"To keep 80 people motivated and task oriented, and to achieve as much as we did was an experience I was glad to be involved in. Session was amazing. Bruce was an inspiration. Dynamic positive person with great people skills." Peter McGregor, Hui. Early Childhood Development Unit.

"The humour amongst the serious business. An excellent outcome in the most positive and fun environment". Bryan Jackson, Chairman, King Toyota

"Very well run and explained. Broken up with a bit of humour but retained focus and direction. A fantastic way of bringing a group of people together to form a team." Jono Bushell. Manager, CommArts.

"Top job and insight into leadership and strategic thinking in the available time. Good interactive practical sessions. Pre-meeting material superb. Any training that breaks down theories and bureaucracy and provides practical elements has to be worthwhile. Excellent." Jeff Dobson, Director, MTA.

"It's really worthwhile. Stimulates your thinking about Astra. Enabled me to focus on the real reason for Astra being in business and the ways for our performance to improve...Staff more aware of need to provide super customer service and consistent quality...[Bruce is] excellent - easy to relate to. Enjoyable to work with." Dave Jenkins, GM Astra Photocopying.

"Just a note to say how much I enjoyed the last two days. I have been to several planning "retreats" over the years and I thought you outshone most in getting the participation of the whole group. You earned your money all right." Tom Young, General Manager- Energy Horowhenua Energy.

"You are an excellent facilitator and organiser, who's been able to present, and quickly guide us through current thinking on strategic planning and management, so that as a group we have been able to focus and agree on the future strategic direction of our programme." Derek Belton, Manager, ESR

“I would certainly recommend using Bruce. I thought your style was relaxed, non intrusive, constructive. It was non threatening and everyone had their say”. Gary Lewis Assistant Government Auditor General.

When to use Strategy

- When managers and/or staff are not clear about "our business"
- When the Organisations is not strong at "decisive point"
- When the organisation is not facing reality
- Falling sales, profits, customers
- Not sensitive to market place
- If you constant get unpleasant surprises
- If you are constantly lurching from crisis to crisis
- If your environment has changed
- If the old strategies no longer effective
- If managers and staff have no common understanding of Vision

Probable outcomes of Strategy

1. Far more focus on what really matters
2. Everyone working to the same agenda
3. People working hard on the business rather than in the business
4. Fewer surprises
5. More collaboration and participation because everyone understands their role

Product support

This product has been developed and is supported by Bruce Holland with help where required from other members of the Virtual Group Business Consultants

Guarantee

All work undertaken by Bruce Holland is guaranteed. If at the end of the program the client doesn't feel that they have received value for money, they may adjust the bill and pay an amount equal to the value they feel they received.



This is what I'm good at, if you'd like to know more, give me a call.

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